

# SEVEN DAYS

## TAKING CONTROL

A Vermont death with dignity

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# URBAN LEGEND

Storied Burlington punk hub 242 Main turns 30 ... kind of BY DAN ROLLES PAGE 32



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Stealing From Work again



## FUN ON WHEELS

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Making the rounds at Skateland



## NAAN STOP

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Rickie's Indian at the pump

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## THURSDAY 29 SECOND TIME AROUND

In 1999, Joel and Ethan Coen's dark comedy *Fargo* became a cult classic. A midwestern maelstrom of murder and mayhem, the Academy Award-winning film resurfaces in the 2014 drama *Kansake: The Treasure Hunter* (pictured). The fest will favorite reveals around a Japanese woman who's convinced that the Coen brothers' movie is a dramatic treasure map.

SEE CALENDAR LISTING ON PAGE 31



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## SATURDAY 31 Frozen Over

It may be cold outside, but the *Ice Fishing Festival* beckons anglers to Minnesota. Bay where the ice is thick and the opportunities to catch fish are plenty. Hosted by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, this family-friendly fish-athon will feature live demonstrations, an underwater live viewing station and, of course, warming holes.

SEE CALENDAR LISTING ON PAGE 32

3

## SATURDAY 30 Blast From the Past

Blurgies, folk and country find common ground when *Calvin* performs. From the 2006 indie folk-popsters' bandcamp album *Blurgies* and plus-in through a repertoire steeped in old-time Americana. Rife with soaring harmonies, catchy lyrics and soaring rhythms, the band heads to Higher Ground for a folk-sleeping show.

SEE SPOTLIGHT ON PAGE 33

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## WEDNESDAY 4 Spoken Word

Even late writer Megan Kingsley is spending literary career. It's hard to believe that she once was made a student of the world's largest poetry festival, reads for five years. University of Vermont professor *Emily Randall* explores narrative's impact on a global scale and ultimately leaves an indelible mark on the world.

SEE CALENDAR LISTING ON PAGE 37

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## THURSDAY 29 Page Turner

Have a question about the publishing industry? Chances are, *Adam Robinson* knows the answer. A writer and publisher's second, the wordsmith hosts *Publishing Series*, an award-winning book press in Atlanta. He knows more to chat about the industry and to select works.

SEE CALENDAR LISTING ON PAGE 31

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## ONGOING An Eye for Detail

Founded in 1982, the Vermont Folklife Center celebrates the state's vibrant cultural traditions with an array of disciplines ranging from living projects to music to visual art. Photographer Susan Adams' new series, *Unscripted Journeys: Life, Death and Love*, reflects this philosophy with a mix of intimate portraits, self-portraits and other forms from cancer patients and their caregivers.

SEE PROFILE ON PAGE 34

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## WEDNESDAY 4 Well Noted

Minneapolis's talent is northern duty when the *Caddy Mack Blues Band* visits Vermont. Led by guitarist Mack Orr, the five-piece group channels the blue-jazz sounds of the South with a mix of original tunes to make music. A mix of covers and original tunes brings art, passion and plenty of soul to the stage.

SEE CALENDAR LISTING ON PAGE 37



## The Kids Aren't Alright

**S**ince the Senate passed into session three weeks ago, two of its top committee chairs have been pushing to pass Vermont's most expensive child protection legislation in years.

Their goal? To put the blockbuster bill on Gov. **PETER FINE**'s desk before the legislature's Twin Meeting Day comes in early March.

But their work hit a significant snag last week when an army of advocates — representing children, domestic violence victims, civil libertarians and even the administration — and opponents on the bill went toe-to-toe. They worry that a proposed new “failure to protect a child” felony could send innocent bystanders to jail for 10 years and discourage drug users and victims of violence from seeking help.

Now the bill's two chief sponsors — Senate Health and Welfare Committee chair **ALAN WYSE** (D-Addison) and Senate Judiciary Committee chair **DAVE STABLE** (D-Burlington) — say they plan to scale back the bill.

“We expected this was going to shake people out,” Ayer says. “We say first to our conviction that this is a crime, but we just need to make sure we define it properly.”

The legislation came out of months of hearings last year that were hosted by Ayer, Wyse and a panel of legislators charged with investigating Vermont's child protection system. The special committee was formed last February following the death of 2-year-old **DEBRAH UNION** of Putney; its mission expanded after the April death of 15-month-old **PROBATION DEAN** of Windsor.

The Vermont Department for Children and Families was working with both children's families when they died of infant abuse trauma.

Ayer and Sears say their bill, cosponsored by a bipartisan group of four other panel members, is intended to address “blaming problems” at DCF and elsewhere in the system. External reports produced in the wake of the 2004 deaths found that the state agency was underfunded, overworked and overly inclined to blame children to their parents.

“To me, protecting kids is paramount,” Sears says. “I think this is the most important bill the Senate has right now.”

Among the changes it proposes, handing the state from sending a child back home if it would be “harmful to [his or her] best interests,” requiring DCF to improve its internal policies, creating a new office of the child protection advocate, and easing confidentiality requirements to facilitate communication between agencies.

While advocates largely agree with the overall intent of the bill, two provisions in particular have drawn scrutiny.

One would redefine “harm” to a child to include “exposure to the unlawful possession, use, manufacture, cultivation or sale” of everything from heroin to ecstasy to marijuana.

**WE EXPECTED THIS WAS GOING TO FREAK PEOPLE OUT.**

SEN. CLAIRE AYER

The other would criminalize the so-called “failure to protect.” The new felony would target not only those who directly harm a child, but also anyone who “knows, or reasonably should have known” that a child is in danger “and fails to act to prevent it.”

The penalty? Up to 10 years in jail and a fine of \$10,000.

Ayer and Sears say these provisions were recommended by state prosecutors, who told them they're often unable to remove children from their homes even when they suspect abuse or are aware of drug use.

“Unless someone goes in and there's needles sitting just outside reach of the kids, it's sometimes difficult to prove neglect,” says Windsor County State's Attorney **MICHAEL SARGENT**, who has witnessed a string of abuse cases stemming from opiate addiction.

Often, says Attorney General **ALL SHAW**, it's tough to prove that a primary caregiver committed abuse, but it's clear he or she was aware of it.

“The reality is we've had a number of cases in Vermont, and not just the ones that have been in the news where, from a criminal standpoint, our hands have been tied,” he says.

In order to speed their bill through the legislative process, Ayer and Sears have been holding joint hearings with House Health and Senate committees each Wednesday.

During last week's session, DCF Commissioner **ANDREW RAY** raised reservations about the “failure to protect” provision, calling it overly broad. That prompted the over-dramatic Sears to walk out of his own hearing, complaining that Schmitt should have warned him the administration wasn't on board.

Sears has been complaining ever since to any reporter who will listen.

“We heard nothing until last week,” he growls. “It wouldn't have helped had I brought his thoughts to us.”

To that, Schmitt, who took over the department in September, says, “I take responsibility. I didn't talk to him. I should have. Lesson learned.”

But Schmitt, who supports many provisions in the bill, is far from alone in worrying about the unintended consequences of the “failure to protect” language.

KidSAFE Collaborative executive director **JAMIE BORDO**, who cochaired a Vermont Citizens Advisory Panel in cooperation with last year's deaths, says she, too, thinks the state should “tread carefully.”

Bordo fears the threat of criminal prosecution of those who expose children to drugs could reverse the state's progress in encouraging mothers to seek substance abuse treatment.

“I am concerned that this could have a chilling effect, particularly on pregnant women coming in for care,” she says.

Likewise, Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence lobbyist **AUDREY WATKINSON** says she believes the proposal could “criminalize” those who are themselves victims of abuse but do not feel safe enough to report the abuse of a child to authorities.

“I want to give the legislature the benefit of the doubt that their idea was not to sweep up victims in this failure to protect, but as the bill is written right now, it does,” Watkinson says.

Victims aren't the only ones who could face prosecution. **ALLAN SHAW**, executive director of Vermont's American Civil Liberties Union chapter, says even a 16-year-old babysitter could be prosecuted.

“The problem with this provision is that it essentially deputizes every person in the state, regardless of age, gender or knowledge,” he says, noting that Vermont already requires trained professionals, such as teachers and doctors, to report abuse.

The bill's expanded definition of harm, he says, could be applied to any number of non-abusers, including parents who illegally obtain pain medication or smoke pot.

“What do you do with parents who choose not have their children vaccinated, or in many people's eyes are putting those children at harm's way because they could contract illness?” he wonders. “Are we going to charge each of those parents? Or what about the school nurse who has a list of children whose vaccinations are not current?”

Ayer and Sears say they hear their critics loud and clear.

“We don't want everyone who smokes a joint to think they're going to go to jail,” Ayer says. “We want there to be a responsibility for parents to have their kids about these — truly responsible.” Both claim they included the “failure to protect” language at Schmitt's behest — and are perfectly willing to soften it.

“He came in July and proposed we do this, and I will admit what we put in the bill is very broad and needs to be narrowed down,” Sears says.

While he's not sure precisely what changes he'll make, Sears says one thing's for sure: “Things never go as fast as you hope, and maybe that's a good thing.”

## Campaign Creatures

If Sen. **BENNE SANDERS** (I-VT) finally decides to run for president, he won't be the only Vermonters playing an important role in the 2016 campaign.

Norwich native **WESLEY MOORE** is all but certain to serve as **MILLIE DUNN**'s campaign manager for her all but certain second run for the White House, according to recent reports in POLITICO, the JMW and the Washington Post.

As we noted in a September 2013 profile, Moak got her start working for the Vermont Democratic House Campaign and then ran the 2002 Democratic coordinated campaign back when **DAVE RICHIE** faced off against **JOHN DRUGAN** for



# Last Rights: Putney Woman Becomes the Third Vermonter to End Her Life Using New Law

BY TERRI HULLENBECK

**M**aggie Lake spent January 15 photographing scenes of her artwork, opening over her car registration and talking quietly with family.

"Then at some point she just said, 'It's time,'" according to her oldest sister, Katy Lesser of Underhill.

After nine years of battling cancer—including two stem-cell transplants, chemotherapy and radiation—Lake had come to the end of her fight.

Lying in bed at her Putney home, it was time to creating; the 60-year-old took the lethal dose of drugs she'd been prescribed weeks earlier. She urged her family to coach her through it as she envisioned the combination of pills and liquids.

"We sat with her. We talked to her. We talked to each other. We murmured. We laughed. We cried," Lesser said.

Within 15 minutes, Lake stopped any or coma. She lay quietly for eight hours before dying in the early morning of January 16.

"It was very, very peaceful," Lesser said. "It was pretty awesome."

Lake lived an amazing life, her sister recalled.

"She was really good at a lot of things," Lesser said. "She had two kids she adored, she was a gifted artist, a family nurse practitioner who treated hundreds of patients, a gardener, a cook and baker who gave all her own food. She kept bees, she raised meat and vegetables."

Just days before Lake died, her art exhibit opened in the downtown Brattleboro. These are the things Lesser wants her sister to be remembered for.

But Lake also had a remarkable death. She is believed to be the third woman in Vermont to end her life with a lethal prescription since the state legalized the option in 2013, according to Compassion & Choice state director Linda Wade-Simpson, whose organization advocated for the law, helps families navigate it and has tracked its use. Lake's family is the first in Vermont to stop forward to share its story.

## Multiple Opinions

Twenty years ago, the people of Oregon voted on its optional Death with Dignity Act. In the decades since, only Washington and Vermont have followed its lead—and only Vermont has gone so legislatively



Maggie Lake in her garden.

Courts in Montana and New Mexico have also protected the practice.

But the debate over Vermont's law is far from over. Advocates plan to seek changes that legislative action to ensure that state regulations surrounding its use remain in effect. They believe the measures guard against abuse, evidence of which would likely lead to the law's undoing. Some of the regulations, including a mandatory waiting period and second opinion, are due to expire in July because of a legislative compromise struck to pass the bill two years ago.

"It's working exactly as we intended," said Sen. Claire Ayer (D-Addison), a leading advocate. "We have a responsibility to make sure it's under circumstances that give us some safeguards."

Opponents meanwhile hope to repeal the Patient Choice and Control at End of Life Act, which was approved by a narrow margin in 2013.

"We never should have passed it," said Sen. Peg Flory (R-Randolph). "I think it sends a horrible, horrible message to life and the disability groups."

Many local medical professionals remain

deeply uncomfortable with the idea of hastening death when their mission is to keep people alive. But since the Vermont law took effect May 20, 2013, doctors have prescribed lethal doses to five people, according to Vermont Department of Health spokesman Robert Stenwick. Two of them didn't end up using the drugs, according to Wade-Simpson, a former state representative from Essex.

Doctors are required to inform the state each time they write such a prescription, affirming that they followed certain criteria, but the law does not require them to report whether a patient used the drugs.

Wade-Simpson's group has collected data information from friends and family

members of those who have sought to hasten their deaths, and from caregivers who have sought the organization's advice.

Jean Salzman, a 67-year-old Middlebury man with stomach cancer, was the first Vermonter to obtain a lethal prescription in November 2013. He died hours before he planned to pick up the drugs, according to his sister, Laura Salzman.

Wade-Simpson said others were unwilling to speak publicly.



Left to right, sisters Jenny, Maggie, Elizabeth and Katy Lesser in 2014.

## Dying the Way She Lived

Lake was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's malignant cell lymphoma in 2006. She enjoyed relatively good health for six of the next nine years, according to her sister. In the course of her treatment, she endured stem-cell transplants, radiation and numerous hospital visits.

Before she knew that a second transplant was possible, Lake wanted looking into obtaining a lethal prescription. That was before Vermont's law passed, her sister said. "We once wanted to help her, because it was illegal," Lesser said.

When the second transplant became a reality about a year and a half ago, she turned her focus to getting better, her sister said. It worked—for a time.

"She seemed to be getting better for a while, and then she started getting worse," Lesser said. Lake's health then quickly deteriorated.

"She started to see her whole without [disregarding], Lesser said. "She was in pain all the time. She was having trouble breathing because the cancer spread to her lungs."

That's when Lake began thinking about the new legal option available to her. She talked about it freely with family her sister said, but the conversations and the decision were difficult. They all would have preferred for her to get better and live, Lesser said, but they were all so used with her disease.

"Her daughter she really felt there was always hope. There she really felt like there was no hope," Lesser said. "In the end she wanted to die the way she lived, with those she loved, in her home, her wife about her, and with purpose and determination. And that is what she made happen."

Lake was the third of four girls in the family, six years younger than Lesser. "Maggie was a distinctive little girl, but she was a powerhouse," Lesser said. "She was one of the most brave people I've ever met."

Lesser said she appreciates that her sister took charge of her death, just as she took charge of her life. Without the law, the end might have looked different.

"She probably would've struggled it out and died a miserable, painful death that would have not included any of us because she would have just been out of her mind

THE DAY SHE DIED, SHE SAID,  
"YESTERDAY WAS TOO  
SOON. TOMORROW'S TOO  
LATE. TODAY'S THE DAY."

KATY LESSER

with pain, drugs, drowning in her own lungs," Lasser said. "We all have that memory of her going out the way she lived."

## How the Law Works

The process of obtaining a life-ending prescription is detailed, which advocates of the law intended as a way of allaying fears that it could be abused.

In Laker's case, that process took time. According to her sister, she spent some time a month trying to find a doctor willing to write her a prescription.

Lasser said her sister's experience led her to believe the requirements are appropriate. "The longer she went through that process, the more doctors, the more encouragement—she became more rooted in knowing the right way to do this," Lasser said.

Vermont's law requires

- a patient to
- Be a Vermont resident.
- Have a terminal diagnosis with less than six months to live corroborated by a second opinion.
- Have the capacity to make a voluntary decision.

- Make two oral requests for the prescription 15 or more days apart.
- Make one written request for the prescription with two witnesses who affirm that the request is voluntary.

White-Simpson said that from what she knows, all three patients who have used the law to end their lives had different doctors.

Lasser declined to identify her doctor. White-Simpson also declined to name those whom she knows have written prescriptions, she doesn't want to send a message that only certain go-to doctors in Vermont will do it.

White-Simpson said physicians who've contacted her for advice have described a variety of experiences. One found his patient lacked the mental competence to make the decision, she said, and turned the patient down.

Some Vermont hospitals and other health care facilities have opted for other policies that prevent patients from using the law without their facilities.

Not supporters of the law say it is wrong. They say they've expected large numbers of people to exercise the right it gives them, and say they know that some could seek prescriptions they would never use.

"The increased convenience causes them to live over the state from people grateful they have the choice," said Dick Waters of Shelburne, president of Patient Choice

Vermont, who has spent more than a decade advocating for the law.

Diagnosed with lung cancer in April, Waters now finds the law personally reassuring. "There's no one as a piece of mind knowing that you're in control," he said.

## Oregon Trail

The number of patients ending their lives has gradually risen in Oregon, where the practice has been legal since 1998. In 2013, 122 Oregon residents received a prescription and 71 used it, according to the Oregon Public Health Division. The Beaver State's population is more than six times Vermont's.

The Oregon law also requires much more detailed reporting of information on each patient. Records indicate that, in 2013, the median amount of time between request and death was 15 months with a range from five minutes to 56 hours. Since 1998, the longest time span reported between request and death in Oregon was 134 hours.

No states have adopted similar laws since Vermont passed in 2003, though some are considering it. One such bill was introduced last week in California.

Meanwhile, those who opposed passage of Vermont's law aren't giving up.

"It's a formula for abuse," said Lynne Cleveland Vitarum, who represents the Vermont Center for Independent

Living, an advocacy group for those with disabilities. "We will push for equal."

Vitarum, who was adult son has cerebral palsy and autism, and the law adds to existing pressures that those with disabilities endure over the value of their lives in the face of expensive health care costs.

When her son was 8 and had pneumonia, she said, his doctor suggested she could consider letting him die.

"This helps a society that might not value us as much as we deserve," she said. "Our minds are expensive. Our care is expensive." Vitarum said. "For some populations, it's not very difficult to socially engineer the will to die, where it looks like they're making the choice."

Vitarum also argued that the law itself has numerous flaws, many of which came as a result of last-minute changes during the legislative process. Many of the regulations and reporting requirements modified



Poppy (Papaver) by William Laker, 2014



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# New 'Don' for Vermont Gas: Can Rendall Win the Pipeline Battle?

BY KATHRYN FLAEG

**W**hen Don Rendall assumed the top spot at Vermont Gas Systems on the first workday of 2015, the former Green Mountain Power executive promised a fresh start for the embattled company. Since Vermont Gas announced its three-part plan to build a pipeline along the west side of the state, the Canadian-owned utility has faced stiff opposition, including protesters who occupied its corporate offices and the private home of its former CEO.

Rendall, who replaced Don Gilbert, isn't alone in seeking a fresh start. Last week, the Vermont Public Service Board decided to reopen deliberations on Phase 1 of the pipeline project, which that board initially green-lighted with a Certificate of Public Good in late 2013. The decision came after Vermont Gas announced the latest in a series of cost increases for Phase 1, which would carry gas to Middlebury (eventually the company intends to build pipelines to Ticonderoga, NY, and Rutland.)

The current Phase 1 estimate is nearly 40 percent higher than originally projected. The new \$184 million price tag motivated opponents of the pipeline and the Vermont Public Service Department, which advocates on behalf of ratepayers, to ask the PSB to restart the case.

In upcoming deliberations, the board could decide to reroute, alter or leave alone the company's permit.

The reassessment comes at a time of flux for Vermont Gas. Rendall said the company's only new hire. Two new construction executives are handling PR and public outreach, replacing former spokesmen. Green Mountain Gas ditched its former engineering firm in favor of another company, and last fall tapped vice president Jon Sinclair to lead the project. Sinclair is bristling at new rights-of-way measures and, of course, represented the cost of Phase 1 "from the ground up."

With Vermont Gas in transition, and with many pipeline opponents firmly entrenched in their disagreement, will a new leader make any difference?

Many longtime critics of the project—including lawmakers along the route and environmentalists generally concerned about the construction of fossil-fuel infrastructure and fracking—are warning jitters.

Actions speak louder than words, and they have to understand that we're not just going to trust again," said Martin Winkler, a lawmaker in Montpelier who has jangled full-time work, one of an elderly parent and the time-consuming job of learning about the pipeline for more than two years.



Don Rendall

"They are claiming, 'We're going to start over and reset.' We don't get to reset."

To the question that actions speak louder than words, Rendall's response was simple: "I agree. We will be judged by what we do, not what we say."

Rendall, who turns 59 this week, moved to Vermont with his wife, Sandra, a native of Norwich, in the 1980s. They landed in Rutland, where he worked as an assistant U.S. attorney, and moved to Burlington three years later. Rendall settled in at the private law practice of the late Farling & Deane, where he got his first introduction to the utility world while representing Green Mountain Power. In 2003, he left the firm to become GMP's in-house counsel.

Rendall's role at GMP expanded over time, and he was no stranger to controversial projects. By the time he left Rendall was a senior vice president overseeing strategy, finances and legal matters at the utility. He played a key role in the company's 2012 merger with Central Vermont Public Service and headed up the utility's Kingdom Community Wind development in Lowell.

GMP CEO Mary Powell said the fact that the wind project came on line, and under budget, speaks volumes about Rendall's ability to shepherd a utility build-out that, like the pipeline, sparked concern from neighbors and environmentalists.

"I think I had more than one sleepless night over that project," Rendall recalled with a slight smile. He noted that his challenge at Vermont Gas — to find common ground "wherever we can" — is not dissimilar to the one he faced when dealing with opponents to the Lowell Wind project.

"While our disagreements sometimes were sharp, and the opposition was fierce, I hope that most felt that Green Mountain Power had treated them respectfully and had listened to them," said Rendall. "That's certainly my goal for this company and for the communities that we hope to serve."

When Rendall set up shop at Vermont Gas earlier this month, he brought some of GMP's office culture with him in establishing a casual, generic office in favor of an open and accessible work space. In practice, that meant converting an office

on the second floor, perched above the main entrance to the office, into Rendall's makeshift office. His somewhat battered office furniture is wedged between the restrooms and a load, clanking door that leads to a storage.

"I want to be accessible," said Rendall, over the sound of a toilet flushing on the other side of a door wall.

"What you see what you get," said Tom Torti, president of the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, of Rendall. "He's not a guy. It's not a facade." Rendall serves on the chamber's board of directors. Torti recalled that when the chamber had to weigh in on public policy issues, Rendall, as a member of the board's executive committee, had to navigate strong and sometimes opposing views. That required flexibility and respect, according to Torti. When he heard Rendall had been tapped for the Vermont Gas job, he said he thought the company had found the "right person."

That's in part because the pipeline project got off to a "very bad start," Torti said. Choosing his words carefully, Torti said Vermont Gas made some mistakes early on — unnecessarily — and turned potential allies against the pipeline. "Because of how they felt they were treated."

**WE WILL BE JUDGED  
BY WHAT WE DO,  
NOT WHAT WE SAY.**

DON RENDALL



"This challenge is to step back, lower the level of the tier—and let people calm down and start a discussion process over again," said Torti. "That's going to require building trust with those with whom trust has been perhaps broken. That's a busy job."

Opposition to the project rose steeply. Detractors have long complained about how Vermont Gas representatives allegedly built landowners, trespassing on private property and were generally uncooperative. Some have reported waiting weeks or months for the company to provide responses to simple questions. Others felt land agents, tasked with negotiating the easements necessary for completing the project, weren't totally honest with impacted communities.

While Vermont Gas could theoretically make amends on some of these fronts, there's another thornier issue—the environmental one.

"This pipeline has no place in Vermont," said Cornwall resident Anthony Burns. He isn't a landowner on the route, but opposes the additional build-out of fossil fuel infrastructure and the use of fracked natural gas. "There is not one redeeming quality, no redeeming factor in this proposal," said Burns. In her mind, a change of leadership is "completely irrelevant."

"It's like saying, 'Would ExxonMobil be better if it had a different CEO?'" Burns asked. Her answer: "No."

Rendall, like Torti, is careful not to point fingers or cast aspersions on how Vermont Gas operated prior to hiring him. He used to elaborate on how the company could have better handled the rollout of the pipeline project. Rendall mislabeled the question: "It's just too easy to second-guess what you weren't in the moment, having to make the decisions yourself," said Rendall. "I just don't think that's a productive exercise."

Rendall profiles the regional question: Where could outcomes have been better? Any Rendall's best is the issue of building respectful relationships with communities and families. He acknowledged that Vermont Gas didn't do that successfully in the early stages of the pipeline project. The company also didn't give a firm grasp of the challenges and costs associated with building a project of this magnitude, Rendall said.

He believes Vermont Gas is making headway on both fronts. "It starts with listening," he said, of repairing community relationships. "It starts with building a relationship that's based on mutual respect and understanding."

Rendall also said the company is getting a better handle on the project itself. He made the decision last fall as he began the transition into his new job to push the pause button on Phase II of the pipeline's permitting process, which would divert gas from Middlebury under Lake Champlain to the International Paper plant in Ticonderoga. He didn't want to repeat the mistakes of Phase I and more ahead with easements that might not be accurate or up-to-date.

"We are under the microscope, and we should be," said Rendall. Internally he said he wants to cultivate a "culture of the highest standards," of "raising hard questions" and of accountability.

But Rendall stressed that there's more to Vermont Gas than the pipeline project. Looking ahead, he said he wants to incorporate renewable sources of gas, such as methane digester, into the company's portfolio. He's interested in, perhaps to increase reliability for some of the company's biggest customers and is thinking about new ways to deliver natural gas beyond the pipeline — including "you identify," like the one Vermont Gas and NG Advantage tested off last month in Middlebury that allows for natural gas delivery without a major pipeline in place.

Natural gas, he said, "gets us to our goal in Vermont of 90 percent renewable by 2050," said Rendall. "We all recognize that there will be a place for nonrenewable fuels in that energy future, and we want the renewable energy fuel to be the cleanest source, the lowest greenhouse gas-emitting source that we can use. Natural gas wins."

But he's not about about winning battles and minds — particularly when it comes to the pipeline. "We have rebuilding to do. That won't happen overnight," Rendall said. "Be optimistic that people will give us the chance to demonstrate that we're on the right track."

Before he takes on the public, though, Rendall may have to convince the Public Service Board. The permit for Phase I of the pipeline project is currently before the Vermont Supreme Court, last week the PSB said the high court to send it back to the board for reconsideration.

"There's no doubt that the benefits are less than they were in the original numbers," Rendall conceded. That said "We remain confident that the project has real, significant benefits for Vermont." ☐

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# Burlington Telecom: From a Cloud of Litigation to a Campaign Storm

BY ALICIA FRESE

**A**t a news conference held January 21 to unveil Burlington Telecom's new look, Mayor Miro Weinberger drove home his point: Troubles at the telecom shop are over.

"Now that the litigation is done, is over with, is gone, is diminished," he began, "we are here to start a new conversation."

His point: The \$35.5 million legal imbroglio with Citibank is resolved, and serious financial problems have been put to rest.

But one thing hasn't changed. Burlington Telecom remains caught in the political crossfire. The "new conversation" Weinberger wanted to start has turned into something that sounds as awful, at least like a campaign debate.

On the morning of the mayor's triumphant press conference, Steve Goodland, a Progressive running for mayor, attended Weinberger's unveiling of BT during an interview with Vermont Public Radio. Later in the day, in an interview with *Seven Days*, Goodland again pummeled him for "throwing out the baby with the bathwater" because Weinberger's settlement entails eventually selling BT.

To Goodland, a former public works director, BT represents one of his political opponent's biggest blunders. It's a primary reason he's challenging the first-term Democrat under whom he's brashly served.

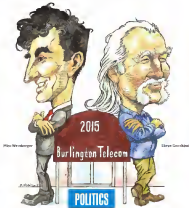
Gary Gurns, a liberal activist and a late addition to the race, too is independent, also identified BT as a main concern, saying he wants to prevent its "corporate betrayal."

Weinberger considers the BT legal settlement the crown jewel of his first term — proof that he's made good on his pledge to clean up the fiscal mess left behind by his Progressive predecessor, Bob Kiss.

Naturally prone to technical, detail-driven explanations, the mayor describes the predicament BT was in — and his work to resolve it — in an enthusiastically stark term: "The bank was saying: Rip up the fiber from the ground!" They were trying to destroy Burlington Telecom," he said recently. "We have saved Burlington Telecom with the settlement agreement."

His administration resolved the \$33.5 million lawsuit Citibank brought against Burlington for failing to repay money the bank spent on building out the fiber-optic network. The parties finalized a \$10 million settlement agreement on January 2.

To pay for a large chunk of it, the city is relying on a \$6 million bridge loan from First Republic. They fear under the loan agreement, First's newly created company, Silverwater Holdings, owns the BT equipment and leases it back to Burlington. The plan is to sell the telecom after no less



than three years, and the sooner it sells after that, the better for Burlington. Its share of the sale proceeds determines revenue, and after four years, the city loses any say in selecting the buyer.

Weinberger has repeatedly emphasized that the settlement eliminated a huge liability risk also predicted that it will "keep tens of millions of dollars in the pockets of Burlingtonians" by eventually precluding an upgrade in the city's credit rating.

In a typed, three-page document provided to *Seven Days*, Goodland wrote that the Silverwater bridge loan contains six drawbacks — he later is forced to claim as "the mayor's six deadly sins" — for Burlington. Chief among these depicts the city "inside the gun" to sell BT and will leave it with only a fraction of the proceeds.

Overlaid with Goodland's document, Weinberger's staffers penned a response nearly three times as long, disputing practically every point.

During an interview January 25 at his sparsely furnished campaign headquarters on College Street, Weinberger was exasperated. "We have wanted on this longer than anything else that we've wanted on in my first three years. I hope you take that as true value."

He made by the remark "It's an agreement that I think is better than anyone thought we were going to be able to secure." Weinberger said, pointing out that the bridge loan saves taxpayers from footing the bill, and it gives the city some control over who will ultimately own BT.

The settlement and the bridge loan did not cause any appeal — after numerous scrutiny — from the Vermont Public Service Board and the Burlington City Council, which includes five Progressives.

"I scratch my head when I see that," Goodland said. "I don't know what to make of that."

One of the five Progressives was Jane Knodell, an economist at the University of Vermont who nominated Goodland for mayor at the Progressive's December caucus.

During an interview, Knodell didn't seem troubled by the candidate's complication that the council signed off on a new deal. She said she would think the administration had presented members with more than two financing proposals, and as a result, "I felt like we should have asked harder questions."

But she didn't support Goodland's view that the bridge loan is a "terrible" deal for the city. "It's not perfect, but it's pretty good," Knodell said. "There's still work under the bridge. I think the average citizen is very happy to have the Citibank settlement behind them, and I think the real issue is how to maximize the best possible future."

Gurns, who serves on the Burlington Telecom Advisory Council, echoed her assessment. "One can quibble about whether it was the best deal possible, but that part of it is done."

Goodland is willing to forgo most of all the money that his renegotiation of BT — something, he said, that has never been done. "We're going to find out what actually happened, not just what's under the rug," he said.

Weinberger contends that BT has already undergone multiple audits and created misstatements and complicit another one "would waste hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars" and "shorten BT from attempts to grow as customers and taxpayer value."

Goodland had been a city employee for three decades — and worked under five mayors — when he retired almost two years ago as director of public works. His company has lost him to Kiss, accusing Weinberger of "contaminating" the "information" and "wrecking" the public from the depths of the experience of EITF. He brought up the maximum sale price for BT — a scaled figure that the city and Prior have agreed upon. Goodland thinks the number should be doubled.

For the mayor, who's always fashioned himself as the anti-Kiss, it's an especially galling allegation — one that he rejects as "just completely preposterous."

There was no one in the campaign, and you've got a former leader of the Kiss administration — coming back, trying to reverse his turn," said Weinberger. "It's trying to turn city into night, and I think it's outrageous."

As evidence that he's made good on his pledge of transparency, Weinberger pointed out that the city now posts its daily financial transactions online. He said that BT releases all of its operating data except for "a small amount of proprietary information that would benefit competitors and

**THIS IS ALL WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE. I THINK THE AVERAGE CITIZEN IS VERY HAPPY TO HAVE THE CITIBANK SETTLEMENT BEHIND THEM.**

JANE KNODELL



hant taxpayers if released." According to Weinberger, the minimum sale price fits that description.

As far as the RT-related, closed-door discussions during the last three years, the mayor stated that they were necessary because they involved a lawsuit and business negotiations.

Several people who're kept close tabs on the deal are inclined to agree. "Clearly discussions of pending legal settlements all comes within the purview of executive session," Goodell said. "So were three things discussed in executive session that should have been discussed in open session? I would say no."

"Yes, it would have been nice if those [Burlington Telecom Advisory Board] meetings were not in executive session, but I think the city has come up with the best deal," said Lauren-Glenn Davison, executive director of the Center for Media & Democracy and a staunch advocate for preserving local ownership of RT. "Really the question is about RT's future. That's

what the conversation should be."

On that, the candidates also disagree.

Weinberger has said the city would likely remain a "passer" with any future owner, and that he's open to a "creative ownership" model such as a co-op. But he's also made it clear that "it is quite likely that the city will no longer be the majority owner the way we've essentially set now."

City ownership is exactly what Goodell wants. He's proposing that Burlington use public financing to buy RT back from the state, and then operate it as a public utility. He says he'd even profit from the operation to eventually pay off the \$17 million in city funds that were improperly diverted to RT when Kras was mayor.

"We're taking all the pain for it. Why would we unload a core and not get any of the benefit?" he asked.



Greg Gurnea

Davison supports Goodell's approach, while acknowledging that it relies on a big unknown: "Is the public willing to pony up?"

Andy Mastrol is a lawyer and chair of Keep RT Local, a group that has been trying to purchase RT and make it a co-op. Before he

launched his campaign, Goodell served on the board. "From my own perspective, if the city can find a way to keep it, that would be fine," Mastrol said. But the group he leads has been "moving on the assumption that the city is going to have to direct staff either all or in part of Burlington Telecom."

Weinberger has said that keeping RT in the city's hands "would require an enormous level of change in terms of the charter, state law, the city's board, and, maybe more importantly, I think there would need to be a dramatic shift in public opinion about what we want for the future of Burlington Telecom."

Gurnea also questioned the feasibility of Goodell's buyout proposal. But he agreed that Weinberger should be doing more to bring together key players including the city mayor and State RT Local, to ensure that the telecom doesn't end up in corporate hands. "There's really no private movement to have any outcome other than privatization."

In some ways, RT is a proxy for a bigger debate.

Goodell calls it a "classic example of the philosophy and management style of the city administration" — in which his rebuttal is, "Burlington is not for sale."

Weinberger suggests that Goodell's recommendations are locally reckless and "would drag Burlington and RT back to the failed policies of the past."

Still, Davison, "Burlington Telecom is a kind of a battle field — no, not a battlefield, an arena — where this debate about community values can be talked about." ☐

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## Sanders Uses Citizens United Anniversary to Raise Campaign Cash

On last week's fifth anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's Citizens United decision, Sen. Bernie Sanders (Vt.) filed a constitutional amendment to limit the role of money in politics.

But he also used the occasion to build out his own small fund and lay the groundwork for a fund-raising push, according to an email chain inadvertently sent to News Day. And as an exchange with campaign and Senate staff members planning for the Citizens United anniversary, Sanders appeared focused on raising money from Washington, D.C. political action committees.

"YES. Let's do it!" the senator wrote in his address referring to a Citizens United-focused fundraising pitch. "How are you doing on the DC PAC fundraiser? Thanks E!"

In the email, campaign aide Nick Carter asked his boss to approve a collaboration



between the Citizens campaign and Progressives United, a political action committee founded by former Wisconsin senator Dan Rostenfeld. Sanders explained, the two entities would join forces on the anniversary of Citizens United selling supporters to sign a petition titled "Democracy's Not for Sale."

Doing so, Carter wrote, would help "to grow our base and send a message to legislators and judges to stand against for progressive values." Later, Carter suggested, the Sanders campaign

would return to those who signed the petition to ask for campaign cash.

"After Action, until 15 minutes to support groups/leadership that are fighting for progressive values in the face of corporate influence," Carter wrote in the January 7 email. Sanders responded he then, on June 14, signing off on the idea and asking about a sponsor "DC PAC Redistricting." According to updates from Michael Page, Sanders was referring to "a small breakfast gathering on Thursday with legislative-style caucus supporters."

What's Sanders doing behind a fundraiser with PAC representatives: grant his supporters opportunity to cash in?

"Like every other member of Congress, I'm in the middle fundraising events, which is what he will be doing tomorrow in Washington," Page and last Wednesday "It's a senator who does not accept

money from corporate PACs, he depends on he always has on the support of trade unions, environmental groups, women's groups and various organizations to support their political efforts."

Just in a brief email to use the Citizens United anniversary as a fundraising tool?

No time when the Koch brothers and other billionaires are pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into the political process, it should not surprise anyone that Sanders and other progressives need to raise campaign funds. Gotta move to public financing of elections, which Sanders supports that is an unfortunate fact of today's political life," he said.

Read the article on News Day's Off Message blog.

PAUL HINTZ

## Land Lovers Speak Out Against Burlington College Development Deal

Nearly 200 people came out for a public presentation and public forum last Wednesday organized by residents who want to preserve the islands land behind Burlington College.

Vermonters have learned that neither and local for decades as it is now called: Portland. Matt Daniel, who also lives at the University of Vermont, addresses many people in the Burlington City Hall auditorium last Wednesday night. Virtually everyone — from high school students to senior citizens — found their heads.

Three months ago, Mike Smith, then the college's interim president, announced a plan to sell most of the school's 15-acre campus to developer Eric Perrell for roughly \$1.5 million. If not for the sale, Smith said, the

campus situation would likely stay down within a year.

The school set a 60-day deadline for any conservation group to buy the development rights for \$2 million. None did. Perrell is closing on the property in set for February according to the filings.

Several people argued that any further development of the property would be unsustainable.

Don Brightman, who was a shareholder and a longtime trustee, another and rings, described the land surrounding Burlington College as "one" that protect the water. If Perrell succeeds in building hundreds of units of housing, the area, he continued, "Those areas will be ripped out of their sockets."



"Basically two-thirds of the area was out over the four-legged, the worst area, the forest area, the creepy crawlies," said Peter Henshaw, another resident of Abundant

Forest. "We're the losers of the deal, but we don't want to be the only losers of the deal."

Perrell is on the second row but did not speak publicly. He has to attend city meeting periods and participate in the state's various model review — potentially helping preservation — to address his development plans. City officials, including Mayor Mervyn Dymally, have been meeting with Perrell to discuss preserving parts of the property including access to the beach and the lake. Perrell's lawyer did not attend the event, but his partner director, Jane Frigoli, did.

Many students pledged to try to keep the project, though some proposed specific savings.

AUDIA FREED

## Bosnian Refugee Convicted

A Bosnian man accused of rape during the Bosnian war from deportation after a jury convicted him on January 21 of trying to smuggle a child into the country to give him citizenship.

John Slobin met about-faced at the verdict, was read as U.S. District Court in Burlington on Friday just as he had throughout his two-week trial. After jurors left the courtroom, he exchanged handshakes and hugs with his attorneys and shook off his shoulders.

Afterward, prosecutors and they will seek to deport Slobin, who also does not have a prior criminal record. His conviction for unlawful

possession of a child, which is a 10-year prison sentence, Judge William Senneby II returned Slobin to his work in the United States while awaiting trial.

Slobin, 34, has lawyers, he hasn't contacted any crime, and his family and those who know him believe in him, defense attorney Steven Perlin said. Slobin's attorney said they will appeal.

"It would be a tragedy if Slobin is to be deported," attorney



David McLaughlin said. "It would have a terrible impact on his family." Slobin has a wife and a 7-year-old daughter in Vermont. He also has an adult son and a grandchild in California.

Slobin had been accused of kidnapping and raping one woman and mistreating a soldier who once dated two other women in the Bosnian War during which Slobin was in a military unit that battled against Serbs. Slobin is a Muslim, and the women he is accused of

raping were Serbs. He denied the 1992 rape and was not prosecuted in the Bosnian war crimes trials.

James did not tell Slobin's lawyer of his conviction whether he had "consented to rape" or "permitted any person" despite testimony about the rape and marriage. Further, they believed he was guilty simply of giving "false or misleading information" to immigration officials.

A recent record since 2001, Slobin had led a quiet life, according to court documents. He once worked for a financial services company, but has recently cared for his young daughter while his wife worked.

MARK ADAMS

## Liberal Activist Enters Mayoral Race

Greg Gans is running for mayor of Burlington as an independent.

The local writer and activist started testing the waters publicly in November, but appeared to back out. Then, last Friday, he told supporters that he had "finally reached the conclusion that my presence in the race was needed, and also that a successful campaign is possible."

Gans, whose decision came just ahead

of the January 26 filing deadline for candidates and he's collected more than the 150 signatures required.

The candidate, once stood at four Democratic incumbents: Matt Weinberger, Progressive Steve Goodkind, Libertarians Lynn Flood and Gans.

Gans dismissed the suggestion that as another Progressive-minded candidate, he risked taking votes away from



Goodkind, it is Ralph Nader. "I don't think these kinds of labels make as much sense as they used to. You can argue that Matt is the Republican candidate."

His campaign slogan is "Preservation and Change," and his platform includes stopping "fast-track development," preserving local ownership of Burlington's electric and opposing the B-35.

AUDIA FREED

# Lawmakers Traverse Shumlin's Health-Proposal Trail

BY NANCY RUNSEN

House member Adam Gosselin (D-Warren) is an end skier and a former in Mail Street Valley's Sugarbush Resort. In a health-care committee meeting last week, he discussed his roller coaster.

Suppose, he said, you are between 19 and 65 years old and want to ski down an 1800-foot trail. How much will you have to pay for a lift ticket? Twenty-one dollars. But if you are a child or over 65, you ski for free.

Someone is paying for those "free" tickets for kids — who ride the lifts and benefit from snowmaking just as paying customers do. Or the adults paying 19 to ride.

You could call it a cost shift, and it has a purpose in the ski industry, Gosselin noted. Letting young kids ski free — and offering discounts to 65+ skiers — is a strategy to get the next generation hooked on the slopes.

A similar cost shift happens in the health care arena — and Gov. Peter Shumlin wants to correct it. What's doing for less on that mountain? Committee.

Medicaid, a health program for low-income people jointly funded with state and federal dollars, currently pays less than what private insurers do for medical services. And Medicaid, the federal program covering health care for the 65 and above set, also skis on the cheap.

The Green Mountain Cost Board compares the extent of the cost shift annually. For 2013, the board pegs Medicaid underpayments to hospitals and doctors at \$150 million. For Medicare, the number is \$175 million.

The first tricky maneuver in the cost shift trail comes when hospitals look to Blue Cross (aka Bluebird, MYP Health Care and other insurers to make up the difference.

At Rutland Regional Medical Center, for example, 70 percent of the patients are on Medicaid or Medicare, CSDT Tom Hughes said. "Block pay is less than it costs us to serve our patients," he said. "That causes us to charge our patients who do have insurance more than it costs," Hughes said. If Medicare and Medicaid paid what the care cost, he said, "We could reduce our price to everyone else by one-third."

Doctors in private practice have little leverage to negotiate fees with insurers, Paul Harrington, executive vice president of the Vermont Medical Society, told the House Ways and Means Committee. They often have to swallow the loss or limit how many patients on government programs they see.

But on the slippery slope, private insurance companies pass higher costs along to their customers — businesses and individuals.

In his January 15 budget address, Shumlin called the cost shift a hidden tax that was increasing at an astonishing rate



The governor, who recently shelved ambitious plans for single-payer care because he deemed it too expensive, deflected 2013 the year to start doing this problem.

But Shumlin's remedy would address only Medicaid underpayment, not Medicare, and be limited to outpatient hospital services and professional medical services only. It would increase Medicaid reimbursements only to levels close to those of Medicare, which are still less than what private insurers pay.

And it would cost — a lot. "In hand it, Shumlin is proposing a 0.7 percent payroll tax that businesses would start paying in December. The tax would save \$44 million in the first six months of 2014 — the second half of the state's next budget year and the cost that lawmakers and the administration are planning now.

In his speech, Shumlin trumpeted the fact that the state would use the \$44 million as leverage to draw down roughly the same amount in matching federal funds to help pay for his total health care initiative. His six-month plan calls for spending \$38 million for Medicaid, with \$20 million going to raise reimbursement at rates and \$18 million to cover 160,000 new Medicaid enrollees.

From the remaining dollars, Shumlin wants to earmark \$4.7 million to boost reimbursement for providers participating in the Blueprint for Health, a program that uses a new pay structure to promote preventive care and disease management. He'd also designate \$5.6 million for private health agencies such as the Harvard Center, \$2 million to help more people cover their out-of-pocket emergency costs, and the balance to manage home, mental health services, and to the Green Mountain Care Board and the tax department for some expanded responsibilities.

Shumlin — and the staff he has barely promoting the plan — stresses that business' tax bills would be offset by decreases in insurance premiums for companies that offer insurance to their workers.

When Rep. Doug Gage (D-Rutland) suggested the payroll tax would require the City of Rutland to cut at least one employee, Shumlin's health reform director Lawrence Miller countered, "That is only looking at one side of the equation. We would see a corresponding reduction in premiums."

Despite that reassurance, Coby Davis, vice president for strategy and public affairs

## I KNOW THE TAXES ARE REAL. I DON'T KNOW THE SAVINGS ARE REAL.

REP. DOUGLAS GAGE (D-RUTLAND)

at the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, voiced the split feelings many businesses have about the governor's plan. "We already believe it addresses the cost shift," Davis said. "We just aren't sure the payroll tax is the way to do it."

The proposed tax makes sense in the business sector because it would open a new funding door. Even a small rate generates millions, which might tempt lawmakers to increase the amount in the future, Davis said.

"It is the proverbial can't-hold-your-breath-the-next-moment," argued Gosselin. He argued the 0.7 percent rate "is just too big a price to raise."

For Sugarbush, which Gosselin described as a medium company, the proposed tax would cost about \$70,000 a year.

Gosselin said the money would be used for tax exemptions, but wasn't ready to get specific.

Doree Johnson, a Republican political operative and founder of Vermonters for Health Care President, worries about Vermont becoming unattractive to new businesses as the only state with a payroll tax for health care. "We talk about the economic harm the cost shift causes, but what about the economic harm of a payroll tax?" Johnson asked.

House Speaker Rhap Smith (D-Morrisville) dismissed some of the criticism, noting that the cost shift has been a priority for Republicans and business leaders for years. "Do they really want to do something or just complain?" Smith said.

Still, the Democratic-led House and Senate are expected to ask plenty of questions about the Democratic governor's cost-shift plan.

Smith offered a couple of his questions, starting with determining the impact of the cost shift on insurance premiums now. "What does it mean to a family of four? Five hundred dollars? One thousand dollars?" Smith asked. He also wants to know how the legislature will know that the money put into the Medicaid side of the equation will reduce insurance costs on the other side, a question that Senate President Pro Tempore John Gendron (D-Windsor) rebuffed. "It's not just social insurance that will help, I don't see how you raise the money," Smith said.

The House Ways and Means Committee spent a recent day trying to figure the new payroll tax-generated money to its proposed destination: personal and business bank accounts.

"We have agreed that we aren't expecting it to be a net increase to hospitals," Ben Grasso, president of the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, told the group.

"How are people insured? There will be net increase in hospital budgets," Ways and Means Chair Janet Ann (D-Gallop) pressed.

"I feel confident we would be able to demonstrate that," Grasso replied.

The Shumlin administration expects that the Green Mountain Care Board has the legal authority to make sure hospitals pass along to insurers any upkick in revenues they see from higher Medicaid payments. Scott Greenhouse, state government affairs director with MYP Health Care, acknowledged the board's jurisdiction over hospital budgets. Still, she questioned the board's ability to ensure that private physician practices also pass along the benefit to insurers.

## OFFENSIVE INSERT

It was with extreme disappointment that I discovered an insert in last week's *Seven Days* that perpetuates both dangerous misinformation and radical misrepresentations of facts. The Vermont Right to Life Committee has every right to explore its options for getting the word out about their beliefs and services, however, as a privately owned publication, the advertising you choose to include is at your discretion.

I am dismayed to see that you chose to include this insert. VRLC's "scientific facts" on page one are far from accurate, as any explanation of the National Institutes of Health information page corroborates development will demonstrate. For example, all organs are not functioning at Week 8; it is not until week 20 that the nervous system is developed enough to even provide minimal control of body functions, let alone "feel pain."

Furthermore, VRLC's statistics do not account for the greatly decreased rate of unintended pregnancies in the state of Vermont as a result of greater access to birth control, birth control and sexual education.

Finally, the personal narratives, while wrought with emotion I can only imagine, paint an extremely narrow picture of the state of pregnancy counseling, abortion services and post-abortion care readily available in our state. Such inflammatory, inaccurate and one-sided advertising is an affront to the respectful journalism *Seven Days* was recently recognized for providing.

Sarah E. Moll  
DARTMOUTH

I was very surprised to find a Vermont Right to Life piece in the January 21 issue of *Seven Days*. As someone who values access to abortion and believes we shouldn't return to all of the banishment associated with abortion, I find your position on abortion to be both irresponsible and misguided.

Further, there are many options with less and less access to viable habitats because of the vast overpopulation of humans on Earth. Even if you think this is so, you are banishing the end of all life as you promote a minor species over all others and make the environment untenable.

For the women in your organization, I would ask you to acquaint yourselves with the pro-life vs. Wade choice rate of women without access to legal abortion. If you support "life," then you need to deal with the reality of an abortion ban. For the men in your organization, when you give birth you will have a right to have an opinion on this issue.

Norman Weinstein  
MONTPELIER

Editor's note: Last week's insert was a paid advertisement, which is not to be confused with the fact-checked editorial content in *Seven Days*. Concerning ad content is a slippery slope, so we do not let it affect the effort in promoting science, facts or ethical product. *Seven Days* is a firm five-free press — no payola, no incentives, letters to the editor and personal ads — and a reflection of the wide range of desires and beliefs in our diverse community. Sometimes that means being relevant of issues we might not personally share. Remember Para?

Edin Salac's guilt or innocence aside, I feel that it is worthwhile to point out that if every German who witnessed, participated, saw, understood and did nothing about the atrocities committed by the Nazis were in fact, verbally every one of them would have been justly imprisoned or executed from the end of a rope.

For the occupation authorities, a series of show trials of prominent perpetrators — that left a misty array of collaborators in civil administration safely in place — seemed a practical solution. In the case of Yugoslavia show trials by far the most interesting aspect of Salac's case for *Seven Days* readers

would have been his defense — not just the testimony of a social anthropologist to explain ethnic tensions but a lesson in how the "globalizing" empositions of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank wrecked the political consensus carefully constructed by Josip Broz Tito.

Needless to say, this analysis, best represented in Susan Woodward's book *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*, has much to instruct us about contemporary policy. Too bad it was given such short shrift in Mark David's reports.

John Shepley  
BURLINGTON

LOCAL *matters*Last Rights OP-ED

on Onondaga, were stripped away to win the votes of two senators, Peter Gahmlich, a Wendell Democrat, and Bob Harwell, a Bennington Democrat. They ensured the few remaining regulations should remain in place because they were against any government involvement in the process.

Gahmlich and Harwell both retired from the legislature last year.

After and the hopes to keep this year's vote focused solely on whether to reinstate the regulations, such as the waiting period and requirement for multiple requests, rather than revisiting the merits of the law itself.

Vinham argues that its regulations are too vague, including the definition of a Vermont resident, which is left up to a doctor. She notes that while the law requires a patient to be capable of voluntarily requesting a prescription, there is no guarantee of a patient's ability to make decisions when it comes time to take the medicine.

Other groups plan to join Vinham in seeking repeal of the law, including the Vermont Alliance for Ethical Healthcare and the Vermont Right to Life Committee.

After said she does not believe the law will be repealed.

"They don't have the votes," she said. "And the governor would veto it."

## "Today's the Day"

Luke got her letter posted online. Filed weeks before taking it, according to her sister. She was waiting until just the right time, without knowing for sure whether it would come, depending on what director her health took.

"The day she did, she said, 'Today's the day to go. Tomorrow's too late. Today's the day,'" Lesser said.

Her two adult children, partner and three others were by her bedside as Luke took the drugs and went into a coma. Lesser said they started to worry as the hours passed. "We started thinking, 'My God, is the day right?'" Lesser said.

In the end, her sister died peacefully. A celebration of her life is planned for June and scheduled in January.

"I am sure you there will be a thousand people," Lesser said.

Just before her death, Luke rushed to finish work for her last art show and traveled to Burlington, with the help of a wheelchair, to see the exhibit, of botanical prints, just before it opened at Michael Giddings Play Arts.

On the gallery's website, Luke wrote about seeing the suffering from a late fall on one of her last hikes through the woods.

"What a wonderful life for me, for my life, as I struggle with terminal cancer, birth, death and rebirth," she wrote.

Her close, a friend, "Gone to Seed," runs through March 1, 2013.

Contact: cern@sevendaysvt.com

Shumlin's Trail OP-ED

Gaps, a member of the House Health Care Committee remains skeptical about the proposal. "There is no saying the rise would come down to the proper amount," he said. "I don't see a mechanism that would truly do that. I know the road is not."

House Health Care Chair Bill Lippert (D-Hennington) plans a thorough review of the governor's plan, but also wants the committee to weigh options. He has scheduled a joint meeting with the House Health and Welfare Committee on January 28 for alternative ways the state could move forward with health reform now that the governor has she'd single-payer.

Dr. Deb Richter, an advocate for a government-financed health care system, will pitch her idea to give all Vermonters free primary care. "Back of the napkin, we would need about \$100 million," she said. "We could do this for a less than 1.5 percent payroll tax." Health insurance premiums would decrease, she contends, because no one would need coverage for primary care.

Peter Sterling, executive director of the Vermont Campaign for Health Care Security, wants to help cover middle-income Vermonters cover their out-of-pocket health insurance costs. He argues that the governor's \$2 million cost-sharing plan would still mean a person with a \$30,000 annual income could spend as much as \$5,000 on health care costs in a year. "That's insanely high," Sterling said.

Sterling will also push options to fast-track enrollment of 4,000 Vermonters who are without insurance but eligible for Medicaid, and he has a strategy to find them.

Rep. Paul Porter (D-Barre) has two ideas as he will share with the House Health Care Committee. Luke Sterling, he wants to help many people pay for their health insurance. He would use money raised by a tax on sugary beverages to boost insurance. He also wants to revise a 2009 proposal to authorize the state to set up an insurance pool — a public option — to compete with private companies on the internet-based marketplace known as Vermont Health Connect. It would cover public employees such as state workers and teachers. Cost-sharing subsidies funded by the state would be offered only through the state plan.

Legislative leaders say health reform remains a priority even though the governor pulled the plug on single-payer. And they agree with Shumlin's former secretary of administration, Bill Spaulding, who declared the single-payer proposal "legislative suicide."

"It's Lippert said. And given the chaotic state around the need for state government to do something about the cost shift — no even our those life-risker prices, so to speak — he added, "If there are a dozen or so not to do that, it's a big deal, too."

Contact: jenn@sevendaysvt.com

# lifelines

OBITUARIES, VOWS, CELEBRATIONS



## Bonnie Christensen

1923-2015, BURLINGTON, VT

Bonnie Christensen, a Burlington author and educator, has released her latest memoir, *My Sister's Seeds* (University of New England Press). The book is a collection of essays about her life, from her childhood in Vermont to her time in New York City.

Of her mother, she wrote: "She was a woman of great spirit, a woman who was not afraid to be different. She was a woman who was not afraid to be a woman." She was a woman who was not afraid to be a woman.

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With it, Joseph-Pepi Hovey, who was born in 1923, was a woman of great spirit, a woman who was not afraid to be different. She was a woman who was not afraid to be a woman.

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A celebration of his life was held on Sunday, January 25, at the Laing-Lane Funeral Home and Cremation Service in Watford. Following the service, a luncheon was held at the American Legion in St. Albans. Condolences may be expressed with the family online at longmirefunerals.com.



## James L. Fitzgerald

1924-2015, CLARKSBURG, VT

James L. Fitzgerald, 91, of Clarksburg, Vermont, died on Sunday, January 25, 2015, after a period of declining health. He was born on November 1, 1924, in the family home in Clarksburg, Vermont.

He was a member of the Clarksburg United Methodist Church and a member of the Clarksburg Senior Center. He was a member of the Clarksburg United Methodist Church and a member of the Clarksburg Senior Center.

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## Maureen Peckley

1913-2015, WOODBURY, VT

Maureen Peckley, 102, of Woodbury, Vermont, died on Sunday, January 25, 2015, after a period of declining health. She was born on January 1, 1913, in Woodbury, Vermont.

She was a member of the Woodbury United Methodist Church and a member of the Woodbury Senior Center. She was a member of the Woodbury United Methodist Church and a member of the Woodbury Senior Center.

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# Sketch Troupe Stealing From Work Finds the Silly Side of the Queen City

BY MARGOT HARRISON

In a back room at Burlington's Regional Educational Television Network, a yoga class is getting out of hand. The flexible folk can't stop one-upping each other with tales of their rigorous personal practices, bizarre retreats, pricey gear, lines scheduled around the yoga mat.

"Yoga is my life's purpose," howls one. "Yoga is my soul mate!" another roars.

And, just like that, they launch into a slow-motion brawl in which yoga poses double as wrestling holds. So much for inner peace.

While this "Yoga Match" is actually a sketch being rehearsed by Burlington comedy troupe **STEALING FROM WORK**, some would argue that it's also a comically heightened version of real life in the Queen City. **WILLIAM D'AMASCIO**, the founding troupe member who writes **SPW's** material with **ANGIE ALBECK**, says her own experiences "taking yoga classes with some absolutist people" inspired the sketch.

Like the IFC show *Portlandia*, **SPW** aims for the sweet spot between cultural satire and silliness—and usually hits the mark. Formed in 2011, the troupe is back with new cast members and a new director for its third full production, which will premiere on February 4 at Burlington's **ARTS CENTER FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS**. The very Burlingtonish *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Food Truck Rally*.

**SPW's** players remain three quarters female, with local actors **LAKE BARRON**, **MARAH PRIGMORE** and **JOEY BARNES**, replacing original cast members **CHLOE COVILL**, **KELLY CHRISTOPHER** and **ASHLEY ROSSIGNOL**. All five actors play both sides of the drop of a hat, but a fair number of the sketches are female-centric—and thank to the point of randomness. In one number, ladies compete for the title of "Miss Post-humous" in the female equivalent of a lipster head-growing contest. In another, **D'AMASCIO** plays a raucous prankster after called the *Pierad Piss*. ("Pierce" she trifles after a pregnancy scare.)

"Love the fact they have no women," says **BARBARELLA**, when discussing **SPW** for the first time this year. "But it's never pedantic, it's never misogynist. They're willing to shudder or at least puke at all sides of the spectrum and political and cultural sensibilities."

Jarvis warms up the players at this rehearsal with a bit of apathy. On this



evening, he instructs them to act out an impromptu "trailer" for the show. That show itself, however, is thoroughly scripted by longtime collaborators **D'AMASCIO** and **Albeck**, who both have day jobs at the Community College of Vermont. (Yes, they say, their boss knows the name of the troupe. And gets a kick out of it.)

Each Thursday, says **D'AMASCIO**, the two women meet to discuss sketch ideas they've recorded in a shared spreadsheet. "Angie is a real writer, and she writes outlines. I sort of turn the characters talk to each other," she explains.

From then, they trade drafts and start periodically polishing each sketch. "By the time we're bringing it to actors, it will be on the eighth or ninth version," **Albeck** says. "We'll hear it and get a sense of the pacing and the flow, and then have eight

drafts after that"—some incorporating lines added by the performers.

The result is thoughtful, highly verbal comedy, animated by physical clowning and noted designer **JOEY BARNES's** comical cues. It's also hyperlocal—but not in a parody laboratory way. (A sketch in a past show, for instance, mocked some of the typical attitudes on display at City Market.)

"I love the way they collaborate together," says Jarvis of **D'AMASCIO** and **Albeck**. "As a writing team, they both push each other in great directions, but then they provide the checks and balances for each other."

Asked about the inevitable *Portlandia* comparison, **D'AMASCIO** says she's heard that a couple of times. "Where it's set is one of the characters," **Albeck** agrees. "It is really grounded

in place. We try to connect with ourselves and our area lives, poking fun at ourselves."

A big part of that is creating vivid characters grounded in their environment. For actors, sketch comedy can be a "tricky medium," says **Moniker**. "Sometimes you have 30 seconds, and that's your chance to present that funny moment."

In the process, a man might play a woman or vice versa, but the switch itself isn't the joke. "We just write characters," **Albeck** says—then let the director cast "the best person for the role. We know it's prettier, let's play with it. Gender is something we want to play with."

In theory that playfulness is accessible to all kinds of audiences—including ones that don't typically show up for live comedy **SPW's** last show, supported by a grant from the Vermont Community Foundation, was "pay what you can." **D'AMASCIO** recalls seeing some critics in the audience, "and I loved it," she says. "And college students," **Albeck** adds.

Hoping for a similarly diverse crowd, they're returning to the pay-what-you-can model for their first performance of *Force*.

When the troupe has run through three sketches—each pausing to break blocking and giggle at **D'AMASCIO's** suggestions at the *Pierad Piss*—everybody takes a break.

Sketch comedy poses its own special challenges, says **Barron**, a veteran of local stages and live productions. "You're creating something fresh—being flexible and creative."

"You got to be silly," notes **Raphael Jarvis**, who's leecher to head theater goes as an actor, director, playwright and spoken-word artist, says he came to **SPW** "as a fan. It's a sweet gig," he notes with a wink. "A lot of my job is just giving them room to play and then steering out of their way."

## INFO

*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Food Truck Rally* runs Thursdays through Saturdays, February 4 to 11 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays, February 12 to 13 at 4 p.m., at Off Center for the Dramatic Arts, Burlington, VT. For the full schedule of performances, join what you can! Tickets are available only at the door. The show contains material not suitable for children. Tickets: [www.offcenterforthedramaticarts.com/shows/stealing-from-work](http://www.offcenterforthedramaticarts.com/shows/stealing-from-work)



# Not Alone: UVM Music and Dance Faculty Pair Up for 'Solos'

BY XIAN CHIANG-WAREN



UVM music professor Paula Bessie in *Assigned Affix*

This weekend, the Solo Workshop, an experimental performance project dreamed up by University of Vermont dance professor **PAULA BESSIE**, will give its fourth annual performance — and the first one in UVM's Recital Hall. Titled *Assigned Affix*, the production teams five composers on the music faculty with five members of the dance faculty. The result? An evening of five contemporary dances choreographed to original compositions on solo instruments: tabla, flute, harp, piano and guitar.

This year's show, Bessie says, is the biggest yet. Aside from dancers and the instrumentalists, each piece has set, costume and theatrical elements. Several of the dances also use And, you, the artists know the project's name is a misnomer.

In fact, the Solo Workshop has always been a collaborative pursuit. It began when Bessie, frustrated by her attempts to create a solo solo dance, invited four fellow performers to meet regularly and give one another feedback as they developed their own pieces. The soon began inviting artists and UVM colleagues working in a variety of art forms, including music, film, theater, visual art, poetry and even bookbinding.

"The whole premise of this was not wanting to do a dance solo, but really not wanting to do a solo," Bessie admits with a laugh. "And now it's like, I'm over it. I want to drag everyone else into this quagmire."

"When you hear 'solo' usually you're talking about one piece," Bessie

continues. "There's lots of solo stuff in there, but the point kind of defied that right away."

*Assigned Affix* opens with "Malabarite," in which dancer **PAULABHRA** and composer **SUNAGAKINO** team up with Burlington visual artist **WILLIE LOUIS** for a dramatic piece inspired by the life of sculptor Camille Claudel. Loosely created benches swathed in white cloth that the performers carry, and Kose plays tabla against an electronic soundtrack he composed.

Next, Bessie and harpist **JOHN SCHUB** present "A thousand times together," an abstract contemporary dance that transforms the stage into a "mini-apartment" with tables, chairs and food. The pair alternates between highly abstract, describable sequences and stylized pedestrian passages in which they eat, drink and wait. Bessie even strums the harp.

In **PAULABHRA** and **CLAIRE BYRNE**'s "Red-Shipper" and **Blacklight**, piece, audience members are treated to "loose, pile-joint" music that "evokes dark, Southern-tragedy themes of spirit possession and not revivals" of accord to apocryphal statement. (The description also — be warned — alludes to audience involvement.) They're followed by an aery piece with just three music composed by **PERCILLA JAGGER** and dance by **LYNN ELISH SCHMIDT** that "evangelical beginnings and moments that are intimate yet formalized," the statement says. Finally, composer **JOHN YAM**

An Evening With  
**CHRISTO**  
Thursday, February 5, 7pm  
Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center - Stowe  
SprucePeakArts.org | 760-6634

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NOT ALONE: M-F 107

# Knowing the Score: UVM's Yutaka Kono Is the BCO's New Artistic Director

BY AMY LILLY

University of Vermont music professor **YUTAKA KONO's** office is fairly utilitarian, but on a sunny day, it's lit up by two enormous tubas resting on their bells and gleaming in the sun. Kono, an accomplished tuba player with a ponytail and a ready smile, earned a doctorate in tuba performance. He has garnered awards performing as a soloist, in a quintet, and in orchestras and bands in several states, as well as in his native Tokyo. Kono also composes for his instrument, among others, and has won two of his pieces performed at *ElysianSpace* since he moved to Burlington four years ago.

Lately though, the 43-year-old musician-composer has been gaining recognition for a third interest: conducting. Kono's duties at UVM include conducting the college orchestra, based on a video of his work at one of its 2013 concerts, he was named a finalist for the *American Prize in Conducting* (college and university orchestra division). He is in his third year of conducting the **VERMONT YOUTH PHILHARMONIC**, the intermediate-level ensemble of the **VERMONT YOUTH ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION**. And last summer, Kono was selected to attend the *Boettcher School of Music Summer Conducting Institute*, where he led the *Boettcher Philharmonic Orchestra*.

All those distinctions make Kono a strong choice for his new position as the artistic director of **BURLINGTON CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**. Christopher Casady's only professional chamber orchestra. In that role, he will conduct at least one of BCO's three concerts per year.

The 34-member BCO is now in its eighth season. Perhaps fittingly, the group's founding conductor was Kono's predecessor on the UVM Orchestra podium, Michael Hopkins. (Another parallel: Kono's wife, **KAYLEIGH KONO**, plays in BCO's viola section, as did Hopkins' wife.) Since Hopkins left for a job in the Midwest three years ago, the BCO has come to bring in guest conductors. Kono conducted one concert last year (he'll do two). Meanwhile, two committees made up of BCO members have been making artistic decisions. They will continue to bring in some guest conductors and collaborate with Kono on programming.

"But there were advantages, especially to having some consistency of leadership," explains BCO violist **SOFIA HIRSCH**, who chairs the musicians'



committee. "And Yutaka has a great personality; is extremely knowledgeable about music and is willing to work with us collaboratively — which is key for a group coming off four years of having musicians make all the decisions."

Kono comes from a country for more oriented toward classical music than the U.S. When he was growing up, Japan's main television stations would pause their programming once a day to broadcast an "80 note" so that musicians could tune their instruments, he recalls. Tokyo supports 12 full-time orchestras, and music instruction is required from elementary through high school.

While an elementary student, Kono — who was already playing the piano — heard a Mozart horn concerto and joined his school band so he could learn the notoriously difficult brass instrument. "But I just couldn't get that sound," he says with a laugh, "so my band director said, 'Why don't you play

that to us over there?'" Kono obliged. He stuck with tuba through the beginning of high school, though his musical tastes were shifting to heavy metal and rock.

When he was 16, Kono moved to the U.S. as an exchange student in New Mexico — and never returned to Japan, except for visits. During his two years of American high school and two at Eastern New Mexico University, he began listening to avant-garde music by Henry Cowell, Krzysztof Penderecki and John Cage, composers who left elements of their work to chance. "I realized there's a lot more to music than power chords," Kono recalls with a chuckle.

Kono left NMU for a tuba scholarship to Bowling Green State University in Ohio. There, he wrote an experimental work for a symphonic band to a gamelan, a percussive Indonesian ensemble instrument. This early composition "sounds like an out-of-time instrument being played," says Kono. He

now teaches both electronic music and traditional orchestral works — what he calls "the polar ends of music."

Kono continued to master at the tuba while earning a doctorate at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and then at the University of Texas at Austin's first doctoral candidate in tuba performance. Discovering an interest in conducting — which he calls "the pinnacle of music" because "you have to know the score better than anybody" — Kono viewed his musicianship as his entrée. "I knew I had to become a better performer first" before launching into conducting, he recalls.

In fact, according to **VAN TONER**, who chairs UVM's Department of Music and Dance, the primary qualification for strong conducting is "being a good musician." In that background, Kono resembles **VERMONT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** conductor **JAMES SARGENT**, a highly accomplished violist who never trained academically in conducting. Toner, who has played percussion with the VSO for 28 years, says "the orchestra sounds so much better than it used to" as a result of playing under the musician's baton.

Kono honed his conducting skills by starting an orchestra with his colleagues at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, where he taught after earning his degree. The endeavor afforded him a five-year position as assistant conductor and artistic director. That's no small thing; conducting positions are so few in the U.S. that the two opening draws hundreds of applicants.

When Kono applied for the UVM position, Toner, then an assistant, watched each of the final candidates conduct. "It was pretty clear we got the right person," he recalls. "Kono is very easy to follow and very good at interacting with people, which is hard to find."

"He's not an autocrat," says BCO violist **ASH MARRIOTT**, noting that Kono takes into account the professional musicians' many "opinions on how things should sound."

Rosinski describes Kono's conducting style as "quite energetic and forceful." I would say: He has a real power on the podium. My family has commented that he's not as vocal."

Kono first learned of the BCO after applying for the UVM job. An internet search of "Burlington" brought up the weekender performances on YouTube. The

quality of the group, particularly the "artistic tone of the strings" impressed him. So did its very existence. For a city of its size, Kono remarks, Burlington "has a lot going on—seasonal concerts and festivals."

Speaking at a BCO reception held last week in his honor, Kono said he plans to increase the group's number of annual concerts and "bring the BCO back to UVM"—that is, move performances from Saint Michael's College, where BCO has performed since Hopkins' departure, to the UVM Recital Hall. Kono also envisions collaborative projects with his academic department, such as professional recording in its studios, which was recently established to support the new music technology and business concentration and minor.

The move will highlight the many ties BCO already has to UVM—including about a dozen faculty and alumni

who play in the ensemble, says Hirsch. "We're homegrown," she points out, and adds that "a lot of us grew up playing in the VFO—a first-late is ridiculous." The choice of Kono as artistic director reflects the local focus, Hirsch says, and it reinforces a message: "I think people should know 'They can make a musical life here in Vermont!'"

Kono, for one, is happy to have done so. Asked what his dream conductor job is, he answers with a wide smile, "This is it!" ☐

Contact: [libby@sevendaysvt.com](mailto:libby@sevendaysvt.com)

## INFO

The Burlington Chamber Orchestra performs with guest conductor and soloist Gavin Kwanon Saturday, February 3, 7:30 p.m., at McGarry Arts Center, 65 McArthur College Way (Catcher's 500.00; Kwanon's 20.00). His first concert as an orchestra director is on Saturday, May 10, 7:30 p.m., in the same location. [burlingtonchamber.org](http://burlingtonchamber.org)

## Not Alone

CLARENCE and dancer LOUIE THOMPSON present "I Didn't Know It Was True," a lively five-act musical piece about "the solo/accompaniment dynamic" and the conflicts that can arise in collaborative work.

Besides yielding an evening of edutainment performance, *Assigned Affix* has been a meeting of minds for faculty in UVM's music and dance departments.

THERE'S LOTS OF SOLO STUFF IN THERE, BUT THE PAIRS KIND OF DEFIED THAT RIGHT AWAY.

PAUL BESAW

The show features exclusively artists who are affiliated with the university and, for the first time, is coproduced by the **LEARN SERIES**.

The Solo Workshop, says Lane Series director **WILLIAM MERRITT**, "brings this great chance for Lane Series audiences to see music and dance that's being created collaboratively in our community." Plus,

she adds, it's a rare opportunity for her series' regulars to see 10 highly talented artists in a single night.

"They're getting a lot of different, stimulating work in one evening of performance," Merritt notes.

This year marks the first performance of the Solo Workshop outside **RENNER SPACE** in downtown Burlington. Besaw and Julian say it feels like a homecoming.

"We wanted to make this something of a UVM family event because we are all on the same faculty together, and a lot of us have not crossed paths," Julian says.

"It's been an opportunity to look at how music and dance work together and to experiment with that," Besaw says. "My dance colleagues and plenty of the music faculty are just really interested in seeing the ways that music and dance can come together." ☐

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## INFO

*Assigned Affix*, produced by the Solo Workshop, Friday, January 30, 7:30 p.m., at 6099 Pennell Hall in Burlington. \$8.00. [sevendaysvt.com](http://sevendaysvt.com)

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# WTF? Why Is Burlington Often Abbreviated as BTV?



**R**ecently, a reader asked *Seven Days* why Burlington is often referred to as BTV in official announcements and names of community programs, such as pleBTV, the Community and Economic Development Office's long-term planning and revitalization effort.

"Is this a result of BTV's use as Burlington International's airport code, or was BTV in use before that?" the query read. "And why not BWTF? WTF?"

First, the easy part: The Queen City's unofficial moniker does derive from the airport's three-letter location identifier, assigned years ago by the Federal Aviation Administration. To be precise, every publicly accessible airport in the world has a four-character alphanumeric identifier called its International Civil Aviation Organization, or ICAO, airport code. However, because all U.S. civilian ICAO airport codes start with the letter K, that letter is generally left off your boarding pass and baggage-claim tickets.

So why was Burlington International, Vermont's largest and busiest airport (which is owned by the City of Burlington but located in South Burlington), assigned the code BTV and not BVT, as logic would suggest? This is especially puzzling, as BVT isn't already used by another airport. Suffice it to say, anyone looking for logic in a bureaucratic decision should brace for an arduous search — and in this case, a fruitless one.

Here's a brief history. According to an oft-cited article by pilot Dave Knapik published in the December

1994 issue of *Air Line Pilot* magazine, airport codes first arose in the 1930s. The early ones simply copied the two-letter designations used by the National Weather Service, which typically set up weather-data stations at airports.

But as commercial aviation expanded in the 1930s, the federal government switched to the three-letter system, which offered thousands more possible combinations. To prevent confusion with the old, two-letter monikers, some airports simply added an X to their original two-letter abbreviations, and those codes stuck. Hence LAX (Los Angeles International), FDX (Portland International) and PHX (Phoenix International).

Today, many of the three-letter codes still make sense. They include Boston (BOS), Atlanta (ATL), DFW (Dallas-Fort Worth), Salt Lake City (SLC), New York's LaGuardia (LGA) and Miami International (MIA). Others, such as Chicago's O'Hare (ORD), are pending until you learn the airport's history. Prior to 1948, O'Hare was named Orland Field. A similar explanation underlies Orlando, Fla.'s airport, MCO, which was McCoy Air Force Base until it was converted to civilian use.

By all reports, Burlington International's three-letter code has always been BTV — leaving the placement of "V" a mystery. But what explains some of the three-letter location identifiers at Vermont's other publicly accessible airports? Jim Thompson, the state aviation

operations manager for Vermont's 10 state-owned airports, can only wish as good luck trying to suss out an explanation.

Some of Vermont's small airport codes are logical, including the Morrisville State Airport (MVL), the Franklin County State Airport in Highgate (FNC), and Caledonia County Airport in Lyndonville (CDA).

But what's the deal with the Newport State Airport (BFA), Middlebury State Airport (BBO) or the William H. Maas State Airport in Bennington (BDH)? The last one might as well stand for "Dunno. Don't have a clue."

"I don't know why they came about that way," Thompson admits. "There's really no rhyme or reason behind how [FAA officials] do these things."

Besides BTV, the Southern Vermont Regional Airport in Rutland is the state's only other airport offering commercial passenger service — three flights daily to Boston. While its three-letter code — BRT — makes sense, it can't deny much to bolster that city's once-rough-and-tumble public image. City planners aren't likely to unveil a "pleBRT" any time soon.

And don't even think about trying to alter a city's three-letter airport code to something more logical, funnier or tourism-friendly.

"At one point we petitioned the FAA to change Newport's code to NEK, for Northeast Kingdom. They basically said no," says Thompson, pointing out that the designation wasn't even in use. "But we tried."

Things could be worse for Rutland. Its moniker is far preferable to that of the Stowe Gateway Airport in Stowe City, Iowa (SUX), Brant's Peeps de Cadeau Airport (POO), Jervis International Airport in Rasmus (PEE) or Butler Memorial Airport in Missouri (BUM).

Like Vermont's B62 area code, Burlington's BTV abbreviation has taken on an identity all its own. Afterward *Seven Days* employee Tyler Machado reported back in 2011, members of Burlington's Twitterati got into a 140-character rant with state-run television stations in Bahrain, Botswana and other countries that start with the letter B when those parties usurped the Twitter hashtag #BTV. Then, about a year later, Burlington #BTV got hijacked (misapplied) by Bloomberg TV's social-media crew, causing much noise, confusion and gnashing of teeth. Twitter savvy Burlingtoners, for their part, should tread lightly with the #BTV moniker for fear of passing off deer, moose and elk banners who currently use the #BUT hashtag.

If bureaucrats ever get serious about asking the FAA to drop BRT for something more uplifting, they should keep in mind that the BVT code is already taken — by Rotenburg Airport in Austria. However, BVC — for Rat Vagabond — is still up for grabs. ☺

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## INFO

Curious or merely curious about something trend your burning question to [info@sevendaysvt.com](mailto:info@sevendaysvt.com).

## Dear Cecil,

My wife read on Facebook about businesses still testing their products on animals. She tried to find out through Google how true this is, but she couldn't get any really clear idea of who was doing what. Is animal testing still prevalent, or are most companies trying to go a different route?

Bob, Lansing, Mich.

If visions of scientifically tortured baby bunnies keep you up at night, stop reading right now. Anti-testing activist groups may not be in the news, but it's really because we live so many other things to complain about these days. It still exists, and in full force. There have been no major U.S. federal restrictions on animal testing since the 1966 Animal Welfare Act, passed back when everyone was more concerned with the cosmos and nuclear war than with the well-being of test moneys (some of whom were recycled into space as companions with said cosmos and didn't do so well in the return journey).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, it's not a very stringent law. Its guidelines don't apply to mice, rats, birds, farm animals raised for food and agricultural research, or reptiles and amphibians. It does cover treatment of the quiet 10 percent of lab animals—dogs, cats, horses, etc.—who presumably have a stronger congressional lobby. Only chimpanzees

receive protection from psychological damage, courtesy of the CHIMP Act of 2000. The minimal standards for their housing, feeding, handling and veterinary care are enforced with \$10,000 maximum fines—but considering it costs around \$25,000 a year to feed and house a chimp, that's a pretty negligible sum.

So, yes, animal testing is, unlike the animals themselves, alive and well. If your wife couldn't track down any good, comprehensive numbers for how many animals are used altogether, that's because they're not out there. We do know, though, that 2013 about 900,000 animals entered under the Animal Welfare Act were killed in research and testing in the U.S., including 170,000 rabbits, 64,000 dogs and 61,000 mink/marten/prairie. That's just the fatalities, and it doesn't include the mice and rats, which make up the great bulk of lab animals. Noting the growing role of genetically modified animals in research, one independent estimate from 2004

put the total number of animals used annually in the US at 80 million.

It's not that there's been no progress. Since the late 1990s the animal welfare movement has been advocating the principle of "replacement, reduction and refinement": i.e., (1) using inanimate materials—like now include computer simulations as well as things like cell cultures — for testing rather than conscious living creatures; (2) minimizing the number of animal subjects needed to get useful results, via better experiment design, data sharing, etc.; and (3) limiting the amount of actual pain and harm the animals experience. Which all basically makes sense, even leaving ethics aside — for one thing, animal stress can alter test results. And to some extent it's happening: Computer modeling has in fact decreased the need for living subjects in toxicity research. Modeling and



in vitro testing still have their limits, though, so 100 percent replacement doesn't look imminent. Some higher-order test animals (mice, guinea pigs) can be swapped out for the lower-order ones (rats, fish, but fish), parrots take tests, but you can't please everyone.

The goals of animal testing have changed as well. Activists may still invoke the specter of cosmetics testing to call attention to the animal welfare issue (it's certainly simpler than food/bathing researchers' bosses), but that's a battle the good guys seem to be winning, however slowly. In 2013 the European Union banned all drugs in animal-tested cosmetics, meanwhile, last year China stopped requiring animal testing for certain cosmetic products. Such moves are possible largely because the cosmetics industry has plenty of existing data on skin irritants, and their analyses can be run accurately using test-tube simulations.

Instead, the vast majority of animals are now used for medical and neurological research — an area that has grown with our increased interest in the health and safety of everyday

and industrial chemicals. The EU's chemical evaluation program, called REACH, will likely require the death of around 2 million animals in its current phase of testing. For the animalists this may not be any more pleasant than cosmetics testing, but at least it's a weightier cause.

There are some research subjects whose animal testing may not be pulling its weight: corneal transplants, for instance. Multiple animal studies show possible weak links between substances like (g.g.) methacrylate and cancer, but no major epidemiological data has been found to indicate clear danger to humans. Comprehensive animal-based cancer studies are time-consuming and expensive, with very high false-positive rates — it's been estimated 90 percent of chemical drug trials fail because animal trials can't accurately predict how humans will respond.

At a certain level, I think most people would still agree, better we humans in a clinical trial than in a manufacturing, and better a dog than a human. It's not a perfect system (judging from the number of lawsuits, anyway), but if, for one, we'd have more trouble sleeping at night without the sacrificial bunnies standing between the diseases and us.

### INFO

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## How Not to Protect Children: Senate Bill 9

**A**s President Obama tests programs for the poor that he knows he won't get, and Gov. Shumlin proposes programs that he must know will hurt the poor, Vermont's legislature has introduced a bill implementing a centuries-old means of "helping" the children of the poor: It detaches removing them from their families and punishing their parents.

Senate Bill 9 (S60006), sponsored by four Democrats and two Republicans, makes it a felony for any "person having the custody, charge or care of a child" who "knows, or reasonably should have known, that the child is in danger" of physical or sexual harm, to fail to prevent said harm.

Conviction carries a penalty of up to 10 years in prison, a fine of up to \$10,000, or both.

The legislation, a response to the deaths of two toddlers last year under the surveillance of the Vermont Department for Children and Families, also gives caseworkers the authority to take kids preemptively from their homes—something only police used to do. The law appears to ease adoption. And it sets up microcosmic systems and mechanisms to increase oversight not only of the agency but of the people under the agency's scrutiny and control.

All of the above are problematic. For instance, critics have pointed out that the bill could hold almost anyone criminally accountable for a child's death, from a passerby to a neighbor looking after the kids while their mother is at her job.

The most likely to be prosecuted, though, are parents. And if the experience of other states is any indication, most punished of all will be mothers, including pregnant women.

Many women will lose their kids and end up behind bars. And that will hurt, not only the children.

Probably the most dangerous part of SB 9 is that it adds a new category of harm, beyond neglect, bodily injury and sexual abuse: "exposure to the unlawful possession, use, manufacture, cultivation or sale" of regulated drugs. Those include methamphetamines, ecstasy and two or more ounces of marijuana.

"Exposure" doesn't mean as of the drug, by family member or child. It doesn't mean addiction. It doesn't even mean neglecting or hurting a child under the influence of drugs. It simply means having illegal drugs in the house.

"If there are kids who need protection, and this system leads to protecting kids, what's the problem?" Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Dick Sears (D-Berlin) asked VT Digger.org's Laura Koehn about the bill.

The answer: plenty. "It's a well-established pattern," Lynn Polrow, executive director of National Advocates for Pregnant Women, told me. NAFW promotes the rights both of women who choose abortion and those who want to have their children. "There is a severe overreaction to the tragic, and fortunately rare, cases in which children die [from neglect or abuse]." That overreaction almost always involves a significant increase in surveillance of parents and removal of children.

Such actions, Polrow continued, "undermine families and do not protect children, who are traumatized by the removal and typically sent into stranger foster care, where they may even be abused."

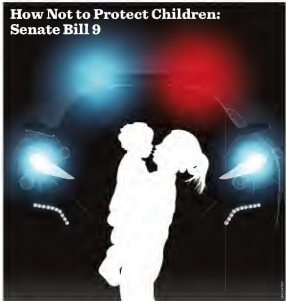
Politics such as those proposed in SB 9 have arisen at the intersection of the War on Drugs and the long-held distrust of poor mothers and mothers of color, whose use of public services places them under the close scrutiny of the state. Those suspicions were fueled in the 1980s, when stories began to surface about "crack babies" born addicted to drugs. Although extensive studies later discredited the notion of an addicted baby, the powerful myth led to excessive penalties for possessing crack cocaine.

Those same fears have been rekindled in today's hysteria over opiate addiction.

In testifying to the legislative committee, whose report spurred SB 9, Attorney General Bill Sorrell pressed for a statute specifically addressing the "risks to a child from an opiate-addicted caregiver." The Senate has given him more than he asked for.

Science finds no long-term adverse effects of gestating in the womb of a drug-using mother, and doctors now know how to treat infants born with drugs in their systems. The cure can be as simple as lots of skin-to-skin contact with their moms.

Still, mothers who show up in obstetrics wards with traces of drugs in their blood have been hauled from



the hospital to jail, where they've given birth to slaves.

Are drug-using caregivers as dangerous? Some can be. Vermont attorney Sarah Star, who has represented parents involved in DCF proceedings, told me on the phone. But "not every parent who struggles with addiction is a bad parent. A statistic that says the family is harmful because of drug use per se — the only word for it is outrageous."

Star predicts that, if it is enacted, the law "would be a hugely coercive tool for the state to treat negligent parents who are struggling to keep their families together and get treatment" for addiction.

It's demoralizing that this bill comes along just as the Wires and Drapins show signs of de-socialization — progress eroded in part by the devastating effects of incarceration on the families and communities of people convicted of drug-related crimes.

59 is almost certain to cause devastation of its own. The bill adds a new hurdle to sending a kid home from foster care: If anyone who lives in the house or might have responsibility for children must "be assessed for criminal history and potential safety risks."

That almost automatically swallows the chance of family reunification. The report to the authorities of the presence of drugs in the household would catalyze drug charges against the offending household member. That person might then have a drug conviction. Under the law DCF would have to consider any relationship to drugs a safety risk terrible enough to impel immediate seizure of the child's custody. Is this agency going to send a kid back into the clutches of a drug felon — that is, her father, sibling or mother?

59 purports "to address the increasing burden of drug abuse and other factors that are ripping families apart." Whether it addresses drug use, homelessness or not, is unclear. But the purpose of a child welfare agency is not to police drug use, it is to protect children from actual neglect or abuse.

As for those other factors ripping families apart, the legislation does nothing.

There are parents whose mental illness or substance use prevents them from caring adequately for their children — or so rude that of parents and self-control that they best up or

even kill their kids. These children need to live with someone else.

But just as spanking a child does not improve her behavior, punishing a mother does not make her a better parent. Nor is increasing the number of incarcerated moms visits a caregiver makes — another mandate of 59 — the best way to safeguard a child from abuse. The best way is to reduce her family's poverty.

The governor's budget shows \$22 million from programs benefiting the poor and disabled — a loss of \$285 million when federal funds are included. Yet, as Starline declared proudly in his budget address, it "does not cut one dime from child protection services." In other words, it tips the child protective formula upside-down.

If 59 passes, however, DCF will need all the funding it can get, because having a parent in prison renders a child more vulnerable to depression and drug use, to dropping out of school, to getting pregnant and committing crimes. The trauma of losing a parent to incarceration is akin to the death of that parent — except that in the former case the child is stigmatized and abandoned, while in the latter she is embraced.

A recent survey estimates that the parents of 288 Vermont children were incarcerated in 2013. Eighty percent of the women in Vermont prisons are mothers, and the majority of them are primary parents of their kids. Most of the women are in for semiserious infractions, such as drug offenses. The state has made considerable efforts to ease the way for these children and buttress relationships with their parents, including Act 165, passed in 2006, which directs several government agencies to develop plans with this aim.

59 marches the state backward from these rational and compassionate efforts. Its sending parents to prison for neglecting to file in an adduced spouse or ward-growing son — or for keeping quiet about a drug problem of their own that might lead to the loss of their children — the law would only spread more sadness among Vermont's children, and make them not a whit safer. ☐

**INFO**  
Paul Hays is a monthly columnist for Justice Levee. But a comment on this story? Contact [leves@www.vermontjournal.com](mailto:leves@www.vermontjournal.com)

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Even locals who don't know 242 Main has those national distinctions know it as the epicenter of hardcore punk culture in Vermont. Since the 1980s administration, it has served as a safe haven for youth who might not otherwise have had one. It's been a musical breeding ground, a starting point for generations of Vermont rockers, punks and otherwise. Many of them have gone on to make music their lives — and livelihoods.

But 242 Main didn't always smell like sweaty punkers. In fact, when it first opened, it usually smelled like banana coffee and chocolate-chip cookies.

**S**erving up a pie-in-the-sky history of 242 Main is tricky at best — and a fool's errand at worst. Very little about the club has been physically documented or cataloged over the years, as its stories exist mostly in the memories of those who were there. And their recollections vary sometimes wildly.

For example, popular wisdom holds that 242 Main opened its doors as a teen center in 1965, which would make 2015 the club's 50th anniversary. Indeed, programming in the name of that milestone has been ongoing since October 2004, when famed hardcore punk band Jane's Addiction played at the club to celebrate the birthday.

The problem? "242 Main opened in March of 1966," says Jane Sanders on a recent phone call. So there's that.

Everyone agrees on one point regarding the origins of 242 Main, though: that Sanders (aka Jane Driscoll), along with Kathy Lawrence, was instrumental in the club's formation and in the vibrancy of its various incarnations. Sanders is now the wife of Vermont's junior United States senator, Bernie Sanders, who was mayor of Burlington from 1981 to 1989. As Jane Driscoll, she directed the Mayor's Youth Office, a now-defunct council created in 1984 to give local youth a voice in city politics. While it was nice for the kids to have a guest room in city hall, Jane Sanders says now that what they really wanted was a place to call their own.

"We all agreed we needed to find a fresh space for them," she recalls, noting that teens would frequently climb in through the window of her city hall office seeking an audience.

An interesting aside note: In the summer of 1980, at the beginning of Sanders' administration, Driscoll and Lawrence had tried to prevent a rock concert at Battery Park in Burlington. They discovered the city had an ordinance prohibiting the performance of rock music on public property, enacted under previous mayor Gordon Pogutis. So Driscoll and Lawrence persuaded the city to have the ban lifted, and Bernie obliged on a temporary provisional basis.

Seeing that Queen City children had not turned into devil-worshipping hellions after the concert, Sanders permanently removed the ordinance in time for a batch of the bands at Memorial Auditorium that November. "It was scary, because there was not a great fan of rock music," says Jane Sanders.

Maybe not, but he may just be Burlington's rock-and-roll under 242 Main couldn't have existed without the removal of that Fordone-style ban.

Around the same time the youth office was born, the city's mayor department vacated its offices in the southeast corner of Memorial Auditorium's basement. Driscoll identified the space as an ideal spot for a teen center.

"It didn't seem big enough for the city to use otherwise," Sanders says now. She approached the board of directors — a precursor to the current city council — an Schell of the Mayor's Youth Office, starting the process of getting city approval to renovate and repurpose the space. With a 160,000 Community Development Block Grant in hand, Driscoll began the work of building 242 Main as a city-run teen center in 1985.

"We relied on a lot of support within the community," Sanders says. She credits Vermont architect David Sellers and designer Ed Owen in particular with helping to shape the physical space — with significant input from local kids themselves. Some teens actually helped construct the club as part of a building class.

"It was extraordinary how they rebuilt this club, took space into a fantastic place," Sanders says.

## THERE WAS A SENSE OF PURPOSE AMONG THE KIDS, AND THEY DETERMINED WHAT THAT PURPOSE WAS.

JANE SANDERS

**W**hen it opened, 242 Main had a full stage that could double as a seating area when it wasn't being used for music. Rock shows happened on most weekend nights, often featuring local bands such as Screaming Branch and the Hollywood Indians. Occasionally bigger bands would drop by, too, including punk legends Operation Ivy and Fugazi.

During the week, the space served a greater variety of purposes. It hosted daily after-school programs for Fairbanks Middle School kids staffed by area high



## Urban Legend BY JIM

school students. There was a weekly lecture series for high schoolers on civic responsibility, featuring guest speakers from the community. 242 was a rehearsal space for plays. It was a production space for a weekly newspaper produced by local kids, the *Queen City Journal*. A weekly local-access TV show called "242 Presents" was filmed there. The place had a full-service lunch counter staffed by teens slinging burgers and fries.

For a time, 242 Main even offered an acoustic-music lounge on Sunday mornings. And most afternoons the smell of fresh-baked cookies and lavender coffee filled the space between walls adorned with artwork and editorial inserts.

Steaders says the heart and soul of 242 Main is the 1980s and early '90s waiver burgers or art projects. It wasn't even punk rock. It was that the space belonged to the kids who used it, and they — not parents or politicians — could make of it anything they wished.

"It was a sense of community. The punger kids learned from the older kids. The older kids took responsibility and learned to be role models and mentors," Steaders explains. "There was a sense of purpose among the kids, and they determined what that purpose was."

"At the time, it seemed people were always saying, 'We have to deal with truancy, drug abuse, problems with kids,'" he continues. "We were adamant that we wanted to deal with the whole person and provide an outlet for their interests and abilities that was not about what was wrong with them, but what was unique about them."

Lawrence, who worked in local correctional centers before he began managing 242 Main, agrees.

"Prevention has more to do with developing and encouraging people's positive early on," she says.

That, and elevating the mood.

Lawrence, speaking from the Burlington clothing boutique *Concrete Thrills*, which she owns, says she almost never encountered behavioral problems with the kids at 242 Main. Visitors, however, could be a different story.

For example, there was the time a Canadian band asked to ship more equipment ahead of their tour stop at 242. Lawrence suggested the band send it to her house in case no one was at the time center to receive it. The package arrived safe and sound on her doorstep — accompanied by an FBI agent.

"There were drugs in with the T-shirts," she recalls, chuckling.

The same was the stored night she escorted GG Allin out of the club bar, well being GG Allin. The notorious punk singer, who grew up in Vermont and is now deceased, showed up and reportedly harried a contraband bottle of Jack Daniel's at the bar during their set.

"Oh, yeah. I kind of remember that," says Lawrence. But by and large, she says, the kids who hung out at 242 Main treated her, and the space, with respect. There's probably because she showed them the same.

"We all loved 'Ratky,'" says Richard Busby, who started going to 242 Main in 1986. A local musician best known for his time in the 1990s funk-rock band *Dysfunkshun*, he currently plays in the punkishly band *SwiffBills*. Busby helped run 242 Main for several years in the early to mid-2000s and now manages Memorial Auditorium. In that role, he still helps oversee the club, albeit in a less hands-on fashion.

Lawrence says she gradually began distancing herself from 242 Main in the early 1990s. Around that time, the Mayor's Youth Office was dissolved by Bernie Sanders' successor, Mayor Peter Clavelle, and the stability of the town center subsequently waned.

Burlington City Arts absorbed 242 Main, but Busby says it was never an ideal fit. Much like the population of kids it served — by then mostly punk rockers — 242 Main became something of a maelstrom within city government.

"BCA tried things like photography classes," Busby says, speaking from his Memorial Auditorium office. "But 242 isn't a classroom. It's just a dark room." And then it just went dark.

In 1998, during his second stint as Burlington's mayor, Clavelle briefly closed 242 Main. After an outcry of public support continued him to reconsider, management of the club was transferred to the Department of Parks and Recreation. Simon Brody, who had been helping book shows at the club since the early '90s, assumed a larger role in funneling bands to the space.

"When I came in, there was minimal funding or a flat devoted to 242," Brody says by phone. Once the local singer of famed Burlington hardcore band *Drownsongs*, he is now a teacher in Kansas. "The occasional punk band would play on the weekend, but there really wasn't much going on."

Brody says he made a concerted effort to tap into and nurture the club's punk roots. It worked. 242 Main ramped up, and some of the club's most memorable shows happened during Brody's tenure — including *Black Flag*, *Converge*, *Dillinger Escape Plan* and *Prosked*. The late '90s were also a particularly fertile era for local hardcore and punk bands.

Another factor in 242 Main's resurgence was the closure of Burlington nightclub Club Tourist on December 31, 1999. Brody had worked at that club and teamed up on its owners Dennis and Jason Wyman, for making connections with bigger hardcore, punk and ska bands.

## 242 MAIN IS THE CBGB OF VERMONT.

RYAN KRUSHENICK UNRESTRAINED





# Wise Counsel

A traditional Abenaki spiritual elder helps those in crisis

BY KEN PICARD

**R**achel Whitebear can empathize with the people who call her at any hour of the day or night when they have nowhere else to turn. Years ago, she found herself on a literal precipice, contemplating suicide. What pulled her back from the brink, she says, was the spiritual guidance she received from her Abenaki ancestors—that and the smell of French fries.

Whitebear, 60, describes herself as a “traditional spiritual elder” who uses ancient Abenaki “medicine” to help others in crisis. From her modest townhouse in Alburgh, she singlehandedly staffs a 24-hour hotline for people who are struggling with divorce, homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, domestic abuse, sexual violence or suicidal thoughts.

Nearly all of her callers are members of the Abenaki community, 80%, Whitebear never asks anyone for proof of tribal membership, and she extends her help to anyone who requests it. People get her number on the Missisquoi Abenaki Tribal Council website or through word of mouth. Most of her calls—she received 606 in 2014 alone—come from Vermont or New Hampshire, she says, but people have contacted her from as far away as Hawaii.

In dealing with callers, Whitebear says, she often draws strength from her own near-death experience and spiritual awakening many years ago.

That transformation began on a warm summer day when, at the age of 15, Whitebear ran away from her St. Johnsbury home. She was escaping from an abusive, alcoholic father who routinely “beat us bloody,” she says. After hearing about a commune called Earth People Park in Rensselaer County, Whitebear recalls, she intuitively accepted a ride in a truck from an older man who claimed he could take her there. He drove Whitebear down a secluded dirt road, raped her at knifepoint, and left her bloodied, bruised and in shock. Whitebear spent the next four days wandering alone in the woods without food or water, sleeping on boulders.

Eventually she made her way to a rocky ledge on Mount Pisgah overlooking Lake Willoughby in Westmoreland. Standing on the cliff’s



Rachel Whitebear

edge, Whitebear says, she prepared to take her life. That’s when she caught a whiff of French fries.

“I thought I was hallucinating,” Whitebear recalls with a laugh. (Later, she discovered there was a snack bar below the spot.) After the days she’d spent alone in the woods, that greasy aroma made her hungry and aroused her yearning for human company.

At the time, Whitebear admits, she was unaware of her native heritage or its customs. (Like many Abenaki, her family, which originated in Quebec,

had been converted to Catholicism by Jesuit missionaries.) She had no idea that traditional spiritual elders routinely go into the woods by themselves for several-day fasts to receive a sacred prayer, ritual or healing medicine from the Creator.

“That was the beginning of my spiritual self,” Whitebear says about her transformational ordeal. “I wanted to be the bad coded up coming out of there stronger than ever.”

In the early 1970s, Whitebear ventured west to join the American

Indian Movement in Wounded Knee, S.D., site of the 1890 Lakota Indian massacre at the hands of the U.S. military. When things began “getting more wild than I expected”—AIM members later staged an armed insurrection against the federal government—Whitebear returned home, but the continued searching for her native roots. It took her more than 20 years to learn the sacred rituals, prayers and ceremonies she now uses.

Whitebear moved to Franklin County about nine years ago. There, she offers her spiritual guidance on a strictly volunteer basis. Besides declining payment for her services, she receives no financial support from the state, the Abenaki tribe or any nonprofit agencies. In fact, Whitebear says she’s disturbed to see a growing number of newspaper classified ads from individuals offering to host traditional sweat lodges, talking ceremonies or other Native American rituals for a fee. She considers that practice antithetical to her culture.

“If you have to pay for their medicine,” she cautions, “you don’t want what they’re selling.”

Whitebear reports that substance abuse underlies many of the calls she receives. A former drug and alcohol counselor and nurse, she worked for many years at the now-defunct Dowdland Center in Montpelier. That program used a Native American approach to substance-abuse treatment called the Red Road to Recovery. Though Whitebear is now disabled and unable to work, she can still perform traditional rituals offer spiritual education and even offer people a place in her home to stay until they can get back on their feet or into rehab.

Last year, Whitebear expanded her operation by setting up a room in her basement where someone in crisis can stay on a short-term basis to sober up, escape an abusive partner or stay clean until a deal opens up on a drug-treatment facility. It has a bed, a stereo and lots of books, but no television. Recently, Whitebear took in a woman in her early twenties who couldn’t live at home because her mother was using.

“We also had young guys who can’t stay in their apartment because their landlord are dragging all around them,

so they have to be removed from that situation," she says. "Where else can they go?"

Despite her past experience in treating addiction, Whitebear emphasizes that she does not run a licensed facility, nor is she equipped to handle someone in full-blown withdrawal or psychiatric crisis. In those more extreme circumstances, she'll typically refer the individual to a more qualified agency — or, if necessary, call 911.

"I know my limits," she says. "If somebody's really strong out, it's not like I can just sit down and do a ceremony because half the time they don't even recognize what you're saying."

Unfortunately, Whitebear says, she sometimes hears about someone's distress only from their family members, after that person has committed suicide. In those circumstances, a parent or sibling may call her seeking spiritual guidance, or as an interpretation of a recurring dream about the loved one. The Akemak, she explains, believe that the spirit of someone who has taken his or her own life is trapped between two worlds and must ask the Creator's forgiveness before moving on. In those cases, Whitebear says, families ask her for help, even when they have no idea how she'll address the problem.

"This is all new to them. They've lost their ways," Whitebear says. "I don't mean that in a bad way. They are so assimilated in white society. They know something should be done in their culture, but they don't know what."

Why would someone in crisis who knows nothing about his or her Native American heritage call Whitebear, rather than a mental health or drug treatment agency?

"We're taught to not air our dirty laundry," suggests Brenda Gagne, an Akemak tribal member who runs the Circle of Courage, an after-school program in Swanton that teaches children about Akemak traditions. "Rachel does great work. She always goes back to the Creator and has always been there when I needed her."

Jeff Davis, 45, is director of the federally funded Indian Education Program in Franklin County and the former long-time chair of the Governor's Advisory

Commission on Native American Affairs. Though not Akemak himself, Davis has worked with Vermont's native community for more than 32 years and has known Whitebear for about nine years, he says.

As Davis explains, Vermonters who don't belong to that community may have trouble appreciating the level of mistrust of mainstream culture that's engrained in the Akemak people. That mistrust dates back to the 1920s and the legacy of Vermont's eugenics movement, which was devastating to the native population. As a result, Davis says, even Akemak who work at local mental health agencies might be reluctant to "make that call" to a facility run by mainstream white culture.

Instead, he says, community members typically seek out Whitebear or find themselves directed to her. Davis personally knows of one young girl who's been in "crisis upon crisis upon crisis," having lost brothers to cancer and suicide. He says she reached out to Whitebear, who instantly made herself available.

"Rachel lives this. She walks this and breathes this," Davis says. "And once you meet her, you realize she's the real deal."

For her part, Whitebear is happy to help whenever she can. And, she notes, not all her calls come from people in crisis. Sometimes she's asked to officiate at a baby-naming ceremony along the Mississippi River or to say a prayer at the bedside of a dying relative. Recently she even heard from a woman who was freaked about a mouse infestation in her home. Regardless of others' needs, Whitebear says, she tries to be there for them and not make it about herself.

"I don't want to build myself out as 'Rachel Whitebear, Medicine Woman,'" she says. "I'm not going to write books or stand in a meditation shouting out my name. I'm very moderate. I blend in with everybody. But I have knowledge, and I'm willing to share it if people need me, because I needed it when I was younger." ☐

Contact: [kenn@newengland.com](mailto:kenn@newengland.com)

## INFO

Rachel Whitebear is available for people in crisis at 360-2345.

## CULTURE

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# How They Roll

Vermont's new roller rink draws a nostalgic clientele — and a new generation

STORY BY MARGOT HARRISON • PHOTOS BY MATTHEW THORSEN

It's a bright, seemingly desolate evening in the big-box cluster at the mouth of Route Wilson Road in Enos. But inside one of those nondescript buildings, disco balls shimmer and colored lights work to the electro-funk pulse of the Gap Band's "You Dropped a Bomb on Me." Spelled by these lights, five adults on roller skates circle the rink in neat formation, doing a synchronized shuffle.

It's the "Vermont Shuffle" spearheaded by Vincent of Milton, a skater who's glad to be the center of the rink to speak to a reporter. He's teaching the steps to his teenage daughter, Kennetha Billade-Vincent, who has accompanied him to Skateland Vermont this Thursday evening. On weekends, Vincent says, the line of skaters can swell to 30 or 50 — many of them friends from very back.

Asked who invented the Vermont Shuffle, Vincent shrugs. "It's traditional. Kids taught each other."

Tradition means some things at Skateland Vermont, a brand-new roller rink — it opened on December 28 — with an old-school ethos. Many of the experienced skaters who whip around the 44-by-100-foot cement floor on quads — four-wheeled skates — are middle-aged parents and professionals. They have vivid memories of skating, dining and socializing on roller rinks during the '60s and '80s heyday, and now they're eager to share the experience with their kids.

Many of these Gen Xers mention the 2000 closing of Vermont's last rink — William's Skateland — as a sad day in their lives. They talk about cruising to New York and New Hampshire for a smooth floor to spin their wheels. And they express gratitude to Scott Peters, Skateland Vermont's owner, for getting them rolling again.

Though Peters has a family connection to the original Skateland's owner, the new business is a separate entity. Like the old one, it is a family affair: Peters's wife, Jennifer, and his daughter, Kennetha. Kennetha, 16, mimics the place, Scott and Jennifer's 9-year-old son, Aiden, is mixed skating when the rink floor was laid and hasn't stopped



"I love it," he says, demonstrating rapid forward turns of "roller jazz" — essentially break dancing on skates — in the snack bar. "I like how you can dance and do whatever you want."

The soft-spoken Peters puts it down to be everywhere in the rink at once — in the rental shop selling quads to a customer, in the DJ booth or appearing across the rink floor with skis. (He has a competitive background in artistic skating, the rolling equivalent of figure skating.)

Harrison says opening the rink was her dad's dream. "He had this vision for a long time. We didn't think that he was crazy, but he was a dreamer."

Renovating and building of the new structure took three years. While the skater development met some opposition, according to the *Enos Reporter*, Skateland's first book page — currently about 10,000 likes — received the community's support and anticipation.

During these last few weeks, Harrison says, about 4,000 people came through its doors, and weekends will sell out. The rink has a capacity of 64, but the Peterses cap the number of skaters at 450 with one "skate guard" to oversee every 150 persons. Theme nights, 16-plus nights, dining lessons and birthday parties are all in the works.

In the fluorescent-bright snack bar, which contrasts with the disco atmosphere of the rink proper, Amyliah Fredrickson of Enos and her two daughters are preparing for their skate. "Roller skating was a big part of my social life back in the '80s," Fredrickson says. Now she has a "goal to skate backwards by the time I'm 50. I'm 44, but I think I can do it."

Fredrickson's teenage daughter has special needs, she says, adding, "This is a gift for us. It's a place where the whole family can go. Everyone's sharing this, everyone's together."

That's an all-around sentiment at Skateland. Melissa Whitney, taking a break from skating with her friend, Kristin Brown, remembers the rink that William Skateland played in her younger years. "It kept me out of trouble as a kid," she says. "Everybody else was partying. I was there."

After the rink closed, Whitney worked out of state to skate and joined the now-defunct Burlington Icebreakers roller derby league. She's now going to Skateland Vermont four nights a week since it opened — and claims she's had 10 pounds in the process. "Now my kids are getting the same experience [I did]," Whitney says.

"We can see where they are and what they're doing," notes Brown, who's new to skating and feels safer as a skater. (Skateland rents both types of skates.)



SCOTT FRANKS



Karen, Elizabeth and Amy Beth Foxallbrook



Tara Blachard of Hinesburg, one of the Vermont Shufflers, met her husband, David, at the first Skateland when she was 16. Now they're here with their 17-year-old son, Cooper. When the Williamson rink closed, "it got as nowhere to hang out," says Tara, who's wearing her vintage, 30-year-old skis.

Vincent Warwick says he "grew up" at Skateland, now he brings his daughter to the Essex rink. Virtually all the parents Seven Days talks to note with approval that Skateland is a screen-free zone thanks to its no-cellphones policy.

The kids don't seem to mind. "I bring a lot of friends here," 16-year-old Madison Vincent says. "They put down their phones and make new friends." Cooper Routhford says he likes getting a cold workout and listening to "older music."

"He's already met quite a few girls here!" his mom teases.

Indeed, given the rink's classic combination of disco, sport and danger-induced adrenaline rush—particularly for skaters who haven't yet figured out how to stop—its role as community

mouthpiece can't be underestimated. Clint Whicker, a former Green Mountain Derby Skates coach, recalls why he learned to skate as a kid: "I realized it's a really good way to get girls."

If that's true, Whicker's son, Stone, should do well in that department. A veteran of pun skating competitions, he cracks the floor rapidly, deftly cross-stepping past the cautious, honey-footed beginners.

Before Skateland, "I used to skate on the wood floor," Stone says. "I'd push all the furniture out." Growing up in a state without a rink, how'd he learn his pun moves? YouTube, of course.

Ryle Elliott is a different kind of "junior"—he skates for the Mean Mountain Boys, the local crew's roller-darby team. Derby dimes and dukes have a significant presence at Skateland, coexisting with shuffleers, roller punners and newcomers who are just struggling to get around the rink. (The beginner's secret is not falling over backward on quads? Bend your knees and skate like a penguin, say the experienced skaters.)

While some derby veterans say they got involved in the rough-and-tumble sport purely to keep roller-skating fun after a different background—ice hockey. He comes to Skateland by practice, he says, but also "to get away from everything I just shut everything out."

Helping to maintain that hormone confusion is Mike Wilbade in the DJ booth. It's his job to instruct the skaters to reverse direction once a night—and then, after a few songs, to send them back to the small courtside dance floor.

When it comes to requests, "everybody loves the '80s," says Wilbade, whose resume includes a long list of local radio stations. "That's one of our biggest things."

Young Cooper Routhford glides up to the window to request Stone Whicker. "You need to change songs," says Wilbade, shaking his head in mock disapproval. "That's the only song you want to skate to." Granted, not everybody has retro tastes. The came to No. 1 requested song at Skateland, says Wilbade, is "Upstare Party" by Mark Ronson.

When 16 pun rolls around, the snuck bar snaps grilling and glaring lights snap on over the rink floor. The mirror balls still dangle from the ceiling, but gone are the hypnotic light patterns that made Skateland feel like an eternal prom circa 1985. The Vermont Shuffle is just a memory until the next session, when Vincent will once again work with his daughter as mastering the tricky crossover.

Roller disco may seem like an unlikely common ground for adults who remember when "999" was on the charts and kids who barely remember the 20th century. But at Skateland, it works. "It's during his childhood with me," says Blachard-Vincent of her dad, "and I'm sharing my memories with him."

**INFO**  
skatevrmont.com

# Punjabi at the Pump

Seasoned Traveler. Rickie's Indian Restaurant

BY ALICE LEVITT



**A**fter a recent weekend in Boston, Ben Gansproch decided to return home to Adamant early to avoid an oncoming storm. When she hit the road, though, she found it covered in black ice. "I was utterly exhausted," she recalls of the drive. "I had a cat that was going insane in the car, and I actually pulled over to call Rickie's. I thought somehow this hell of a day might be reprieved if I could actually get some."

Home Indian food, that is. The "Rickie's" from which Gansproch sought deliverance is Rickie's Indian Restaurant in South Berre, an establishment hidden inside Rickie's Shell & Deli on Route 34. The only exterior hint of

the fragrant fare within is a hand-drawn sign beneath a neon advertisement for Bud Light: "Serving Indian food everyday! It announces in pink, orange and green print "Tandoori fresh naan bread."

The first statement isn't quite true. Owners Gary and Kelly Singh actually take Sunday off from preparing their Punjabi menu. But their schedule didn't stop them from fixing something up for Gansproch on her stressful Sunday — and she's not the only local taking notice of the couple's kindness and their earnest intentions.

The restaurant owes its very existence to the Singhs' desire to please their new neighbors. The couple moved from Michigan four years ago

with their three daughters and one son (Rickie is the youngest daughter) to be closer to Kelly's siblings who live in Woonsocket. After they bought the gas station, it wasn't long before customers began asking if the couple would consider adding Indian dishes to the Shell's basic deli offerings. "A lot of people were requesting it in the beginning, so we said, 'Let's start with once a week,'" Gary recalls.

Unlikely as it may sound, Rickie's is actually not the first gas-station-based Indian restaurant in Vermont. Jo Indian Restaurant has plied Rutland diners

with mango lassi and gobhi jeera for nine years.

The Singhs' new venture prospered, too. What started as a few dishes every Thursday quickly expanded to service on Tuesday and Thursday and demand kept growing. Gary says he realized that to offer the kind of full-scale Indian meals regulars were hoping for, he'd need a kitchen to match. That meant adding a tankard, the 900-degree clay oven central to his fiery's curries. Punjabi comes. In August, the kitchen passed state inspection, and



PHOTOS BY THE PUMP © P&P

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# SIDEdishes

BY HANNAH PALMER-EGAN &amp; ALICE LEVITT



## The Main Event

NEW PIZZERIA TO OPEN IN MORRISVILLE

There's a new place coming to Lunenburg County. When it opens next month at 53 Lower Main Street in Morrisville, pizza in Maine will bring traditional New York-style pies (whole or by the slice), sauce, subs and other snacks.

Co-owners MICHAEL JANSSEN and MARISA MENONDI grew up in Watchtower County, N.Y., a stone's throw north of the Bronx, which is one of the city's last remaining Italian strongholds. After 9/11, MenonDI headed north and settled in Stowe. She says she always missed the small-town pizzeria she grew up with. "My favorite food in the whole wide world is pizza," she tells *Seven Days* via phone.

Though the area is home to other pizza shops, MenonDI wasn't finding what she craved. "I can't tell you how many times I'd be shopping in Morrisville and I'd want to grab a quick slice, and it just wasn't there." When she started exploring the idea of opening a pizzeria, she realized she wasn't alone. "I think it's something that the community really wants," she says. When Janssen moved

Stow, which closed in 2000 after nearly 40 years in business. Though the new business will fit in no way resemble the old, Janssen says he's looking to keep alive the spirit of that town's culture. "The last week Arthur's was open, we saw this video [looking back at its history]. That video, it just tugged on my heart," he says. "People need a place like Arthur's, and we're looking to bring that back."

—H.P.E.

## Hot Commodities

NATURAL FOOD STORE OPENS IN STOWE

In 1993, HUGHES and JANSSEN opened Commodities Natural Market in New York's East Village, the sequel to a Tribeca store he purchased had once owned. More than 20 years later, he and wife JANSSEN are opening their second store here this week. While it bears the same name as the Manhattan store, which the couple still owns, the new CNM is located at the city's antiques epicenter—Stowe's Mountain Road.



"We have always loved Stowe. We decided it was ultimately where we would raise our family," Andrea Hughes explains. It took 12 years of dreaming and eight years of searching for a space for their market before the family sold their home in New Jersey last spring and relocated to Vermont. Before long, the

site they sought materialized at 312 Mountain Road, formerly Oxygen Yoga & Pilates.

While the market specializes in organic and local products, Andrea emphasizes that doesn't mean "necessarily expensive" fare. "We're not taking that big markup," she says. "As a resident, [I find that] organic food in general is so expensive up here."

Besides such as produce and Vermont cheese fill the shelves, but local specialties have their place, too. A filling station offers both *sova* wine, *apricot*, and *robert's* red wine will open a pop-up shop in the store, while *esse* covey & vici's beans will be available in the bulk section.

Though the space is too small to contain a kitchen of its own, MICHAEL JANSSEN of *essence*, a new venue in Watchtower Center will, and own prepared foods, including quiches, smoothies and "innovative hand pie" to fill the gap-and-go case, Hughes says.

Besides selling local goods, the Hugheses are fir-

ting right in to their adopted neighborhood by partnering with *Befrency Vermont* to make the store optimally energy efficient. They'll send their organic food scraps to Watchtower's *sova* compost or *vermont*.

—A.L.

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food



Gary Singh rolls out dough

## Punjabi at the Pump

Raddie's began serving from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

The Singhs have yet to buy a single oil for their tiny restaurant, yet Gary says the Indian food now accounts for about half of their food sales. The rest of that revenue comes from the sandwiches, rice-and-bean stacks and other American staples left over from the gas station's former life as D&D Smokehouse Deli. Most products from Vermont Smoke and Cure, which had its headquarters right on back of the Shell station until the company moved to Montpelier in 2012, also attract those looking for American fare.

The Granite City has a long history of welcoming immigrants and embracing their cultures. At Raddie's, one sees that attitude in action. On a recent Wednesday, an older man with a rough, rural look puts Gary on the chair as he waits for his food at one of the long tables facing a TV tuned to CNN. "I'm a good man, but you're the best man I know," he tells the gas-station owner.

Gumprecht, a former New Yorker and foodie, has noted the local support for the Singhs. "I'm sure a lot of people there haven't even had Indian food before," she says. "The farmers are sitting there eating their 'weird' food. It's definitely not red-flannel hash, thank God."

The couple's personalities may help draw in our diners — whether experienced with Indian food or not — but their way with flavors seals the deal. While eldest daughter Shalpa staffs the deli counter, Kelly spends her hours in the back kitchen when she's not running the Shell register.

**THE FARMERS ARE SITTING THERE EATING THEIR "WEIRD" FOOD. IT'S DEFINITELY NOT RED-FLANNEL HASH, THANK GOD.**

BY GARY GUMPRECHT

Back in northern India, Kelly recalls, her mother taught her to make vegetable dabbas. "I learned all the vegetables from her," she says. "Back then, most women didn't eat meat."

Kelly and Gary grew up Hindu, in a culture where meat was traditionally taboo but rapidly becoming less so. "From my generation, we started eating it, but my grandmother's generation, they were all vegetarians," explains Gary. Kelly learned to prepare lamb and chicken from her father, who ate both freely.

Both parents taught her well. On the vegetarian side, Kelly makes the farmer cheese for her saag paneer from scratch.

While many versions of the paneer spinach stew earn gray hair from overcooking, hers is a deep emerald. By turns soft and chewy, the paneer accounts for as much of the dish, served in a black plastic container, as the spinach. No skipping on protein here. The only thing that breaks up the goodness of green and white is an occasional red chunk of chile, which generates lip-tingling heat.

On the controversial side, Kelly's father would be proud of the lunch carry. Vermonters should take note: This is the real deal. A thick brick of chole, made of garlicky and green chile, both soaked chunks of saag and paneer. On top, sprigs of cilantro lighten up the rich, spicy concoction.

Spicy indeed. While the carry may leave only diners with the most sensitive palates gasping for water, even those with a pen for heat won't complain. Gary admits that he keeps the spice level milder than his family would prefer, but he's happy to up the ante for guests who can handle it.

Not surprisingly, the endlessly appreciable-sounding butter chicken is the top seller among Raddie's customers who are still learning the basics of well-spiced Indian cuisine. "It's not too much spice," Gary reasons. "It's sweet with a little kick in there."

For a real shot of spice, the Singhs will cook up a chicken vindaloo. That and several other dabbas, including shao

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# **|| SIDEdishes**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

## **Crumbs**

LEPPOVE READS NEWS  
On February 13, Middlebury's **VENISON** restaurant will host a daylong Valentine's Day event called Love Chocolate, Love Venison. The chocolate component involves a "friendly competition" with caterers for both professionals and amateurs. Within each division, events specialists also compete in both baked and non-baked (foods: money) categories. Registration forms are due by February 9 and available at Vermont folkfestival.org.

On the 13th, attendees can share their love stories between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., with the option to record their

posterity in the center's studio. While events will be available all day, an official tasting session from 5 to 7 p.m. will accompany story sharing in the gallery.

**THE NEW ENGLAND CULINARY** services will offer an opposing perspective this Valentine's Day. Instead of chocolate, a special prix-fixe dinner served on February 13 will focus on venison. Executive chef **JOHN VAN DER BEEK** has enlisted top-tier Victor Dupuy of Privé to bring venison in its varied forms to Vermont.

The pair will host the five-course dinner at the center's venue in Montpelier. "It's a savory venison from A to Z," Goria says with excitement. Well, not literally

After courses such as seared scallops with Tahitian vanilla powder and pork belly with Madagascar vanilla lobster bouillabaisse, the meal will end with three desserts, each showcasing a different vanilla-growing region.

Those who are seeking a V-Day meal with a little more variety—or who mean to love with vanilla—can go next door to **VENISON** for four-course dinners on February 13 and 14. Each course will feature options such as seared filet fins with compressed apples or braised-cured salmon with cucumber gelatin.

—A.L.

## **CONNECT**

Follow us on Twitter for the latest food scoop! **ALICE LUTWILL**, **PHILIP D'ALESSANDRO** and **HANNAH PALMER** (@grrrfoodies)

gobs and the mashed-eggplant classic bolognese bharata, can be served with an hour's notice. Most of the menu is available ready to go for \$8.99 until 2 p.m. After that, entrees such as paneer tikka masala or aloo chole cost \$10.99—and all are accompanied by homemade meat raita and tangy, miso-flecked sautéed chutney.

A skillful home cook might be able to make an excellent Indian stew with enough practice and the right spices, but most lack the secret ingredient a tandoor. The Singh use theirs to their advantage to produce the fullest, most tender meat this reporter has had in years. The ghost-busted bread is worth the trip, but why not pair it with an order of chicken tikka? The chaos of gory, yogurt-soaked chicken is edged with oil from the tandoor, the taste of fire lending them a bit of danger.

The Singh admit there's a measure of risk to their business. Besides losing meals the major commitment of the tandoor, they must take frequent trips to New York for hard-to-find spices. Per now, Billy became the least of the cooking because the family hasn't found a worthy cook to share her labor.

Gary has searched in New York for a young Indian immigrant with the

magritte talents but has failed to attract one to Vermont, he says. It's tough to teach an American the skills, fearing (but he'll have to start from scratch. "When you grew up with the spices, you know what they are. Some things you just can't teach, especially the taste," he argues.

When Rucker's is finally able to hire another cook, the increased labor force may mean even better news for lovers of Indian grub. Besides the gas station, the Singh own the adjacent space that was once Vermont Smoke and Cure. Gary says that if Rucker's proves to be popular enough, he'll expand the restaurant into that additional area. "We'll see how the demand is," he says with a hopeful rise in his voice.

As the people behind some of central Vermont's best-loved flavors, the Singh have every reason to be confident. And for travelers like Guspreet, to whom fuschia road food can mean the difference between a good day and a bad one, an expanded Rucker's might just be a blessing.

Contact: [elena@newvermont.com](mailto:elena@newvermont.com)

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# Succulent Scrapbook

Preserving Cambridge's local lore, one recipe at a time

BY HANNAH PALMER Egan

**L**ike poetry, dance or visual art, food has a story to tell. But unlike other forms of expression, food reveals a veritable tale — a living history. A plate of food reflects the economic and social status of those making it; their habits, the ways they celebrate and the ways they mourn.

In late December 2014, the Cambridge Historical Society teamed up with Shelburne's Wind Ridge Books of Vermont to publish *Tasteful Traditions: A Collection of Cambridge History, Memories and Family Recipes*. The hefty, well-designed hardcover is filled with recipes and stories submitted by residents and compiled from newspapers, personal collections and community cookbooks.

It's an odds and ends working-class town's gustatory traditions — part cookbook, part scrapbook. And even to someone not from Cambridge, its recipes and photos — turns-of-the-century shots of Holsteins pulling wagons or babies wrapped in feather beds — are fascinating.

**WE GOT STORIES FROM PEOPLE WE HAD NO IDEA EVEN EXISTED.**

JUSTIN MARSH

After finding some decaying, century-old cookbooks, coeditor and CHS board member Justin Marsh and he wanted to document his hometown's heritage. "These books were barely hanging on for dear life," he told *Seven Days* via phone last week. "And they were filled with these recipes from the early 1900s. We wanted to preserve them so they could live on for another generation."



Old and history  
Cambridge



### A RECIPE FOR SCANDAL

Everyone loves a good scandal — except, of course, the people involved. But in most, sleazy three-leaf comedies, everybody leaves everybody's check books. Since not a whole lot else signs up on for news events, gossip tends to run rampant.

In *Taste of Tradition*, the authors went 11 miles to things you can eat. The end of the book contains formulas for cold remedies, poisons and other first aid as well as wallpaper recipes, and other "things worth knowing." These things include a 1980 "Recipe for Scandal" sourced from an old publication by the Jeffersonville Cemetery Association. It would be a shame not to share it.

Take a piece of bread and a handful of sun seeds. Use same quantity of rabbit (or any spring of herb) herb to be transported and put your left hand on the head of rabbit and the head of the rabbit, and a little, abundant and possibly and then through a bag of construction, and lay in battle (or construction) and then it up a system of street pins, keep it in a hot atmosphere, make it accordingly for a few days and it will be fit to use. Let a few days be later before making out and the discussion will follow.

Marsh and coeditor Teresa Higgins, who has lived in Jeffersonville for nearly three decades, posted submission requests in Lancaster County's News & Observer, on Front Porch Forum and on Facebook.

At first, the community was lukewarm, Marsh said. "Another cook book?" some residents asked when he told them about the project. "I have dozens of cookbooks. I don't need another," they told him. But when word got out that his stories would appear alongside the recipes, contributions began to flood in.

Most of them came through word of mouth. "[Since] we're a historical society," Marsh said, "we have some members who are not so lucky for them, it was having phone conversations with their friends. It's that old school phone-trail network." The responses spanned far beyond the town's borders, which encompass the villages of Cambridge and Jeffersonville.

Hotel McKinley circa 1900



"We got stories from people we had no idea even existed," Marsh said. Folks from as far as Florida and the Carolinas — with roots or family in Cambridge — sent along old scraps of paper. "The stuff we collected ranged from really faded old photographs, newspaper scraps," Marsh said. "Lots of the [newspaper articles] were cutouts, and we didn't know the dates or even what newspaper they were in."

For months, the editors scoured out sources for each piece. "There was an element of guessing," Marsh conceded, "and process of elimination. Like, that was in the *Burlington Free Press*, and that is in the exact same typewriter. We were working as librarians and archivists. It was definitely a new process for us."

Marsh's grandmother, Roberta Marsh, is a retired CHS board member who has lived in Cambridge since 1952. She and the retired antique-hobby together, consulting the dots between a dish gleaned from a primary source and something obtained from a secondary source, such as a newspaper or cookbook.

RECIPE: TASTE OF TRADITION BY PHE

# hint...



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By **EATON**

## Succulent Scrapbook



At one point, the elder Marsh said she was digging through a cache of 100-year-old newspapers at the library, looking for something on the Hotel Melendy (now the Stratford Inn) in Jeffersonville. "People would stay at the hotel," she said, "and there was this really crude road up through the marsh, and people would go by horse and buggy to the top of the mountain. Mrs. Melendy would pack their lunch, and one of her favorite things to make was this sunshine cake. Then, we were going through this old cookbook and there it was! This recipe for sunshine cake. That kind of thing happened more than once."

Roberta Marsh said that back in the day, the threshold for local news was different than it is now. "It was sort of like people were writing in their diary. Someone got annoyed and fell down and broke their leg, and it would be in the paper." And there's a good thing about it, 82 years of age, Roberta Marsh has only recently realized that she's an elder — and that members of her dwindling generation are the last people on Earth who would remember some of these stories.

As the unofficial Cambridge town historian, Roberta Marsh and the girls calls from people all the time asking various things. Sometimes she knows the answer, sometimes she doesn't. "There are just so many times when I think, Who would know the answer to this or that question?" she said. "And the person who would know it? Gone. So if you don't put it down on paper, you lose all that information."

To document and preserve the culinary past, here are a few recipes associated as they appear in *Taste of Tradition*.

## Doughnuts

This recipe came from Lucy Brewster. Lucy and Marion Brewster would have used one rack for the batter-cook and had to fry the doughnuts in.

1 cup sugar  
1 teaspoon nutmeg or cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon ginger  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
2 eggs  
2 tablespoons oil  
1 cup buttermilk  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
3 cups bread flour, more if needed to handle dough  
Cinnamon

Use cast-iron or electric frying pan (375-400-degree setting) with about 2-3 inches of cooking oil.

Combine sugar, nutmeg or cinnamon, ginger, and salt. Add eggs and stir well. Add oil and mix. Holding cup of batter mix over bowl, add baking soda to batter mix and stir. Add to bowl and mix. Add flour 1 cup at a time, mixing after each addition. Dough should be thick enough to handle.

Spread about one third of the dough on floured surface and cut with doughnut cutter. Fry in oil until golden brown, remove and drain on paper towels. Repeat with remaining two thirds of the dough, until all the doughnuts are cooked.



More food after the classifieds section. PAGE 47

## food



### Parker House Rolls

Recipe submitted by Roberta Mendi

Carmie Leone ran a boarding house for several pupils living in Fairbanks, Vermont. My mom, Hana Porter Rockwell, was one. She boarded with Carmie, graduating from Cambridge High School in 1928. A story she told me was coming back after a weekend at home, they would bring cookies, fudge and other treats to snack on throughout the week. However Carmie would confiscate the treats and take them out at midnight, leaving her sons looking out for their wellfare!

1 quart milk  
butter, size of an egg  
one half cup sugar  
1/4 cup yeast  
A little salt  
2 quarts flour  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda

Moderate oven (350 degrees)

Mix thoroughly milk, butter, sugar, yeast and salt into two quarts of flour. Let stand in a warm place until morning. Then add baking soda dissolved in a little water and rise again. Knead again at about four o'clock to have warm for supper. Cut into biscuits and rise again. Bake 10 minutes.

### Impossible Quiche

Recipe contributed by Nancy Nagel

1 cup Swiss cheese, shredded  
1/3 cup onion, finely chopped  
Bacon, shrimp, crab, SPAM or other meat of choice, cooked and diced  
2 cups milk  
1/2 cup ketchup  
4 eggs  
1/4 teaspoon salt

Set oven at 350 degrees. Lightly grease a 10-inch pie plate.

Sprinkle cheese, onion and diced cooked meat over the bottom of the plate. Place remaining ingredients in the blender and blend on high for one minute. Pour into pie plate. Bake 50-55 minutes or until knife comes out clean. Let stand five minutes before cutting. ☺

Contact: [harend@vermontpage.com](mailto:harend@vermontpage.com)

### INFO

The Greenleaf Historical Society along with Greenleaf Taverners editors and contributors will have a reading, signing and tasting of select recipes from the book on Saturday January 31, 11:30 am, at Smugglers Ranch Inn, 20 Church Street in Jeffersonville. [smugglersranch.org](http://smugglersranch.org)

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## NATIONAL HERO

In Zimbabwe, Oliver Mtshudzi is a cultural icon. "Tuku," as he's known to fans, has more than 50 albums and dozens of awards to his name, along with a reputation for redefining the country's music. Backed by his band the Black Spirits, 62-year-old Mtshudzi defies his age with hard-hitting guitar licks and infectious dance moves. Singing in English as well as Zimbabwean languages Shona and Ndebele, the energetic performer delivers powerful sociopolitical messages, capturing the struggles of his people in insightful lyrics. Equal parts entertaining and educational, the cross-cultural star continues to wow audiences the world over.

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**On the Rise**

Singer-songwriter Ashley Sofia has "top-line star" written all over her. The 23-year-old native of Tuxedo, N.Y., grew up on a steady diet of Janis Mitchell, Neil Young and Johnny Cash, and it shows in her songwriting. Heralded as a "reincarnation of the Laurel Canyon folk-rock sound" by No Depression, Sofia channels the 1960s and '70s on her debut album, *Love and Forgiveness*. Graced with vocals and stage presence beyond her years, the diminutive talent belts out what she describes as "poems set to music" alongside her mentor, Bryan Kennedy.

**ASHLEY SOFIA**

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## FLYNN TiX



2/1 SU	VT STAGE: "DR" FlynnSpace (1/26-2/15)	2/14 SA	CYRILLE AIMÉE & HER QUARTET UNM Rental Hall
2/2 MO	Broadway National Tour "NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT" ManStage	2/15 SU	VALENTINE'S DAY BASH W/MARIO Vegas Nightclub
2/4 WE	"A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO FRONT PORCH FORUM" The D9 Center (2/4-8)	2/16 WE	"SCHOOLHOUSE" ROCK LIVE! ManStage
2/6 FR	BRETANO STRING QUARTET UNM Rental Hall	2/17 TH	NATALIE MACMASTER & CONNELL LEAHY ManStage
2/7 SA	Chipendale's 50 SHADES OF MEN Vegas Nightclub	2/18 FR	BIG HEAVY WORLD XSWS Main St. Landing Black Box
2/11 TU	HOTEL VT ICE BAR Hotel Vermont (2/6-7)	2/19 TH	GREGORY PORTER ManStage
2/12 W	CAPITOL STEPS ManStage	2/20 FR	FAURE QUARTET UNM Rental Hall
2/13 TH	BURLINGTON CHAMBER ORCH. McCarthy Arts Center at SMD	2/21 SA	SHANTALA SHIVALINGAPPA ManStage
2/14 FR	5TH ANNUAL DANCE SHOWCASE Main St. Landing Black Box	2/22 SU	CRAIG FERGUSON ManStage
2/15 SA	DEATH ManStage	2/23 MO	KRISTINA WONG FlynnSpace
2/16 SU	HAWAIIAN GET LEID PARTY Vegas Nightclub	2/24 TU	GEORGE THOROGOOD ManStage
2/17 MO	ON SALE AND COMING SOON "Hole" at Theaters + Little Big Town + Behind the Beatles Forum + SMT Pacific Event at MTV	2/25 W	FRED HERSCH TRIO FlynnSpace
2/18 TU	ERIC BIBB UNM Rental Hall	2/26 TH	ERIC BIBB UNM Rental Hall
2/19 W	BRYCE DANCE CO. & TOBY MACNUTT FlynnSpace	2/27 FR	BRYCE DANCE CO. & TOBY MACNUTT FlynnSpace

802-86-FLYNN | 153 Main St., Burlington





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## theater

**BLIND AND TENDER** Tue 10:00 p.m.  
**DR** / See 100.00 info

## MON.2

## education

**EDGES HIGH SCHOOL ORIENTATION** Fri 7:00-7:30

## environment

**REACHING OUR BELIEFS** (Landscape with an agenda) inspired by the environmental crisis in an eye-opening discussion. See Burlington Women's Building for details. American Ladies Club South Burlington 7-8:30 p.m. Free. presale info 802.436.60

## etc.

**AMERICAN BIG CIGAR ROLLING DRIVE** See 100.1

## fairs &amp; festivals

**NATURAL WINTERFEST** Sat 10-10:30

## games

**WHEEL CLIMB** Tue 10:00-11 p.m.

**SEVEN SEVEN** Seven of seven winners gather for a moment of the month. Lobby Hotel Vermont, Burlington 7:00pm. Free. Info 802.660

## health &amp; fitness

**HYDRO FALLS WITH IMPROVED FLEXIBILITY** Tue 10:30

**NEURAL CIRCULATIONS** (Bodywork, Lactate Bounce, Bio-Chess and 16 others from the Vermont Center for Integrated and Holistic Health and Individualized diets and health conditions. City Market/Office at River Campus Building 4-6 pm. Free. presale info 802.436.60

**RELIGIOUS OF THE FUTURE** Led by Prof. New Phil. Study of Christianity: focus on teaching of world religions in the 21st century. Bodywork/Office at River Campus Building 4-6 pm. Free. presale info 802.436.60

**PERSONAL YOUR EARTH** See 100.2

**RIPPLES** See 100.2

**WINTER WILDLIFE WITH SHARON ANDERSON**

**WILDLIFE** An evening of guest birding with the help of a local resident on the road and the season. Vermont Center for Integrated Health and Wellness 6-8 p.m. \$10-15 presale info 802.436.60

## kids

**ALICE IN HOOGLAND** (Tales of a young girl who is a girl and the world of the world) and the world of the world. See 100.2

**COUNTY W/ CAROLINE AND NINA** (A story of a young girl who is a girl and the world of the world) and the world of the world. See 100.2

**KIDS' NIGHT** A fun filled evening for children ages 8 through 12. See 100.2

**THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD SING** (A story of a young girl who is a girl and the world of the world) and the world of the world. See 100.2

**MUSIC WITH PETER** (A story of a young girl who is a girl and the world of the world) and the world of the world. See 100.2

**READ TO GO** (A story of a young girl who is a girl and the world of the world) and the world of the world. See 100.2

**THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD SING** (A story of a young girl who is a girl and the world of the world) and the world of the world. See 100.2

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## news

**SPRINGING YOUR FUTURE** (A story of a young girl who is a girl and the world of the world) and the world of the world. See 100.2

## sports

**COACHING YOUR FUTURE** (A story of a young girl who is a girl and the world of the world) and the world of the world. See 100.2

## talks

**ALAN ALBA** (A story of a young girl who is a girl and the world of the world) and the world of the world. See 100.2

## theater

**THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD SING** (A story of a young girl who is a girl and the world of the world) and the world of the world. See 100.2

## writing

**CREATING WRITING WORKSHOP** (A story of a young girl who is a girl and the world of the world) and the world of the world. See 100.2

MON.2 #100

# Don't Let Injuries Keep You Sideline

Learn about our Monday afternoon and evening Sports Medicine Clinic with Dr. Mahlon Bradley.

Monday evenings / 3:30pm- 7pm

Our scheduling allows extra time for sports specific evaluation and treatment recommendations, with later hours that allow school athletes to schedule appointments after school, practice or work.

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University of Vermont  
HEALTH NETWORK

Central Vermont Medical Center



# HEALTHY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Compensation available for participants in a year-long vaccine study for the Prevention of Dengue Fever. Includes 5 dosing visits and brief follow-up visits. Adults between the ages of 18-50. Earn up to \$3000.



For more information and to schedule a screening, leave your name, phone number and a good time to call back.  
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## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

### RE GREEN MOUNTAIN POWER'S PROPOSED 2014 IRP

You are hereby notified that a Hearing Officer of the Public Service Board, Kevin Fink, Policy Analyst, will conduct a PUBLIC HEARING on Monday, February 9, 2015, commencing at 7:00 PM, for the purpose of allowing the public an opportunity to obtain information and/or comment on Green Mountain Power Corporation's proposed 2014 Integrated Resource Plan IRP or least cost Integrated plan (Docket No. 03097).

Under 30 V.S.A. Section 214(c)(1), a "least cost integrated plan" for a regulated electric or gas utility is a plan to minimize the public's need for energy services, after safety concerns are addressed, at the lowest present value life cycle cost, including environmental and economic costs, through a strategy combining investments and expenditures on energy supply, transmission and distribution capacity, transmission and distribution efficiency and comprehensive energy efficiency programs.

Hearing location: The hearing will be conducted utilizing the Vermont Interactive Technologies network at the following sites: Bennington, Brattleboro, Lyndonville, Middlebury, Montpelier, Randolph Center, Rutland, Springfield, St. Albans, White River Junction, and Williston. For directions: [www.vtrink.org](http://www.vtrink.org) or contact the Public Service Board at 802-432-2350.



All hearing sites are handicapped accessible. Please contact the Public Service Board at 802-432-2350 if you require accommodation.

## calendar

MON 2 & 3

**WHEELS' HOT GROUP** Southerners give food bank an extra boost & the Presence of A Friend from an Ordinary Place. Car-Circle Educational Center. Highgate Public Library 9 a.m. Free info. Feb. 23-24.

**ACQUAINTANCE** The author explains how to use a food source to find the best food for you. 13 Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000.

## TUE.3

### community

**VERMONT VOLUNTEER SERVICE** Help projects around the state by organizing, planning, and leading. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000.

### profiles

**THE PRACTICE OF SERVICE** A portrait of a woman who has spent her life in the service of others. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000.

### classes

**INVENT TO THRIVE** A series of classes that will help you to create a business plan. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000.

**TOWN LANE** The latest in the series of classes that will help you to create a business plan. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000. Eastern Plains Heritage Center. 100000.

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### education

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### arts

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### events & festivals

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### entertainment

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## fitness & fitness

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Join your friends at the  
18th annual Kids VT

# Camp & School Fair

BURLINGTON HILTON • FREE!

Saturday, February 7,  
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**SAILOR JERRY**  
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60 PROOF

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12  
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- Cocktails featuring Sailor Jerry Spiced Rum
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Vermont's Premier Adult Outlet Store



Visit [sevendaysvt.com](http://sevendaysvt.com) to register for speed dating



## 1000-0000/01/0000-0000\$05.00/0

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YORP

**ENGLISH IS HOT YOUNG. TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT!**

offering colorful vintage style page layouts including a poster in the Larkins and House of Mirths Hot Page in a 30-degree studio-sourced vintage room. And, the first on a cold day is a trending practice, the cool stars mind editors a chilled overall workout based to a complete page for a page a page.

2046 N. Wilmington Ave., Huntington  
Ind. 46760-0001

**Keywords:** *depression, mood, mood disorder, mood disorder diagnosis, mood disorder treatment, mood disorder symptoms, mood disorder signs, mood disorder risk factors, mood disorder prevention, mood disorder management, mood disorder prognosis, mood disorder etiology, mood disorder pathophysiology, mood disorder epidemiology, mood disorder prevalence, mood disorder incidence, mood disorder morbidity, mood disorder mortality, mood disorder quality of life, mood disorder social support, mood disorder coping, mood disorder self-help, mood disorder therapy, mood disorder medication, mood disorder surgery, mood disorder alternative medicine, mood disorder complementary medicine, mood disorder integrative medicine, mood disorder holistic medicine, mood disorder mind-body medicine, mood disorder behavioral medicine, mood disorder lifestyle medicine, mood disorder preventive medicine, mood disorder public health, mood disorder population science, mood disorder clinical research, mood disorder basic research, mood disorder translational research, mood disorder systems biology, mood disorder genomics, mood disorder proteomics, mood disorder metabolomics, mood disorder bioinformatics, mood disorder data science, mood disorder artificial intelligence, mood disorder machine learning, mood disorder robotics, mood disorder nanotechnology, mood disorder biotechnology, mood disorder pharmaceuticals, mood disorder medical devices, mood disorder health services, mood disorder health economics, mood disorder health policy, mood disorder health law, mood disorder health ethics, mood disorder health communication, mood disorder health education, mood disorder health promotion, mood disorder health equity, mood disorder health justice, mood disorder health equity, mood disorder health justice, mood disorder health equity, mood disorder health justice.*

**Yasuni Physics:** The app offers a variety of classes in a supportive atmosphere. It's never awkward. *Kate, founder* post-adoptive-motherhood to three newborns, brings *Angela Carr*, Therapist and *Allyson Adams*, Doula, part of our page community. *It's so welcoming!* *Carly Carr, DSW, PhD, LCSW and Dr. Mikenna Kelly Adams, LCSW, Post-Adoption* in 2016 said: "I, the English

**RENTAL RATES: THE ONLY**

[illegible]

or \$100/40 class card. \$100 class fee standard on seminar or \$100/40 class piece is used. Co-located: Howard Noyes Center, 250 Howard St., (Rm. 140) and the Special Group Center, 5, Burlington, Ind. 47301-0100.

**SAUNING OVER YOGA.** Highly featured, arched cedar saunas offer year-round, wood-roofed and elegantly lit saunas, overlooking the Alameda River. Three types include Granite, Virginia, Juvenis, and Kestrel in

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**WGA BOOKS:** WGA Books provides a starting guide to all gay-inclusives in all ages and abilities. We are constantly growing. [www.wga-books.com](http://www.wga-books.com)

grits, your joyful spirit, through  
 a series such as *Personal Yoga*,  
*Derrile Yoga*, *Animateur* (spread  
 all kinds of literature and  
 located Virginia Floss the new  
 winter schedule). General Space  
 and Room. See: 7-113, 8-113, 10-113.

There's a lot to celebrate this year at Irish Week: 10-30-71-61-4-11. Winter comes, Kinsale! More. Papa. Right for Times, Lenny. Lenny and Lighting Up with Maria Greff. Free & S.T. Chabon Workshop. Free 14 noon 3pm. at High Back 5. LUNCH/DRINK. Presentation recommended. Location: Santa Monica, CA.

Dr. Graham-Rowley, ShellSource Green Building Plus Ireland Partner  
July 2015 50000 graham@rowley.com



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## Taking Pictures

BCA  
CENTERJANUARY 30 —  
APRIL 4, 2015

Opening Reception:  
Friday, January 30, 5-8pm

Exhibition features the work of Christian Benda, Dana Brinkman, James Cavallaro, Sarah Chubbart-Smith, Honey Dwyer, Jack Goldstein, Louise Lawler, Robert Longo, Allan McCollum, Cheryl Sherman, and Laurie Simmons.

If you're the kind of music lover who routinely stalks high-profile national acts at Higher Ground, or even if you favor smaller singer-songwriter spotlights at Radio Bean, you might think the untold fabric of the Green Mountain State is one cut from purely American cloth. Yet tucked away in Charlotte you'll find Cumbacha, a record label, publisher and booking agency focused almost entirely on world music.

Founded by ethnomusicologist and cultural historian Jacob Edgar, Cumbacha's mission is to expose international artists to American audiences. To do so, Edgar looks for artists who, he says, "have a cultural connection but a global appeal who have a certain heritage, but a sound and vibe that is appealing across borders and generations."

Two of the latest Cumbacha finds fitting that profile are Joe Driscoll, 36, and Sekou Kouyate, 30. An musician from utterly different upbringings, they make an unlikely pair, but their shared musical palette makes them a dynamic and complementary duo.

Kouyate was raised in a musical family in Cessigny, Guinea, where he was trained in kora, a 21-stringed traditional African instrument similar to a harp. Kouyate also trains with the band *les Cessigny*, a quartet composed of his cousins and brothers.

Kouyate brings the ancient horns into modern times by running it through a distortion device and creating a sound comparable to that of an electric guitar. "African music has continued to evolve," Edgar says, "and Sekou is the perfect example of that."

Driscoll approached African music as a means out of growing interest, not family bus. Growing up in Syracuse, NY, he developed an appreciation for American hip-hop and rap and began performing and recording. Prior to teaming up with Kouyate, Driscoll operated as a one-man band, using live looping and beat boxing while also playing guitar, bassoon, tenor-bass and various percussion instruments.

Kouyate and Driscoll met in the summer of 2010 at the Nuits Mito (Midnight Night) music festival in Miramas, France. At the festival, individual musicians are paired together, often not knowing one another beforehand, and given a week to produce a concert. Kouyate and Driscoll were matched but did not share a common language. Driscoll speaks only English, while Kouyate speaks French and his native Sissala.

Instead, they let the music speak for them. Their combined talents produced a mélange of hip-hop, funk, traditional African beats and reggae that startled them both.

"It's like putting baking soda and vinegar together. Our styles were totally different but complementary," Driscoll explains by phone.

Driscoll knew that Kouyate was a rare talent and proposed continuing the partnership beyond the festival.



# Mutual Appreciation

The unlikely union of Cumbacha's Joe Driscoll and Sekou Kouyate

BY LIZ CANTRELL

"I met Sekou, and I said, 'Hey, man, let's work on this for a while! It was kind of one of these 'follow the river' things, and I went with it.'" Driscoll remembers. "Sometimes it just leads you something."

The impromptu collaboration and subsequent follow-up work eventually culminated in a studio-recorded album, *Rézo*, released in February 2014. The record caught Edgar's ear, and he reached out to Driscoll and Kouyate to gauge their interest in becoming part of the Cumbacha Discovery series. That's a sub-label Edgar uses to introduce cutting-edge new artists or, as he puts it, "people who are not broadly known but I think are special talents."

Driscoll and Kouyate fit the bill, and soon the pair was promoting *Rézo* through Cumbacha. After the album's release, the musicians toured throughout 2014, racking up 120 shows in Europe in addition to gigs in New York, Chicago and Vermont.

Addressing themes of poverty, cultural differences, and the literal and figurative barriers between people, *Rézo* presents a powerful social statement. It's also

a thoroughly listenable and catchy album. The opening track, "Toussaint," is a lightning-fast number that showcases Kouyate's lush talent, while the title track highlights Driscoll's rapping abilities against a backdrop of rough guitar and Kouyate's harmonies.

"Erratically" blends reggae and hip-hop with moments of blaring horns. As Edgar describes it, the album "mixes elements of both of their styles, but brings them together in a compelling and accessible way."

"This is hip-hop that my grandmother can listen to," he says.

Considering the language barriers, crafting songs for *Rézo* was a challenge. Driscoll and Kouyate wrote their own songs, and then used friends who spoke the other's language to translate.

"We wrote them and then found out what the other was saying afterwards," Driscoll recalls.

While this backward method could have produced contradictory results, their separate attempts contained





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JOE BRISCOLL AND JESSE KAUPPINEN © 2014

## Mutual Appreciation

BY PAUL

surprising similarities. Driscoll cites a song he wrote called "Lady" Kauppinen had picked up a few English words, including "lady." As a touring musician, he understood the trials and tribulations of maintaining a relationship on the road, which was the focus of Driscoll's song. The two went back and forth in separate versions, contributing lyrics to their respective languages, to eventually create the bilingual album track.

Next month, Driscoll and Kauppinen return to Vermont to record a new album as the Camboacha sub-label. Now that the two have worked together for a few years, can fans expect to hear Driscoll rapping in French and Kauppinen crooning in English? Not exactly. While Driscoll is slowly learning French, he says they mostly still communicate through "vocalized talk and sign language."

Perhaps that's as it should be. The musicians' combination is exceptional and electric not because of what they have in common but because of their unique contributions and experiences. Different upbringings, languages and

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instrumental skills are the tools that define their sound and their partnership. As Edgar says, the duo represents "part of our cosmopolitan, globalized world." ☺

## INFO

Joe Driscoll and Jesse Kauppinen were scheduled to perform at Artalkies in Burlington this Friday, January 30. But just prior to press time, the show was canceled. Camboacha founder Jesse Kauppinen is deeply grateful to the community and plans to reschedule the performance. Sign up to receive it at [josephdriscoll.com](http://josephdriscoll.com) and on iTunes.